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The goal of this series of inservice teacher education units is to help classroom teachers understand the disadvantaged, to suggest promising teaching techniques and approaches, to stimulate thought and discussion among teachers, and to improve human relations throughout the field of education. The first unit identifies the disadvantaged student and duscusses his educational needs, the attitudes and roles of teachers, and the nature of the learning process; the second unit describes specifically the social and psychological characteristics of the disadvantaged student, concentrating particularly on his learning style. In each of these units the major points are summarized and questions for discussion and a bibliography are included. For other units in this series see UD 005 367, UD 005 472, UD 006 841, UD 006 842, UD 006 843, and UD 007 191. (NH)

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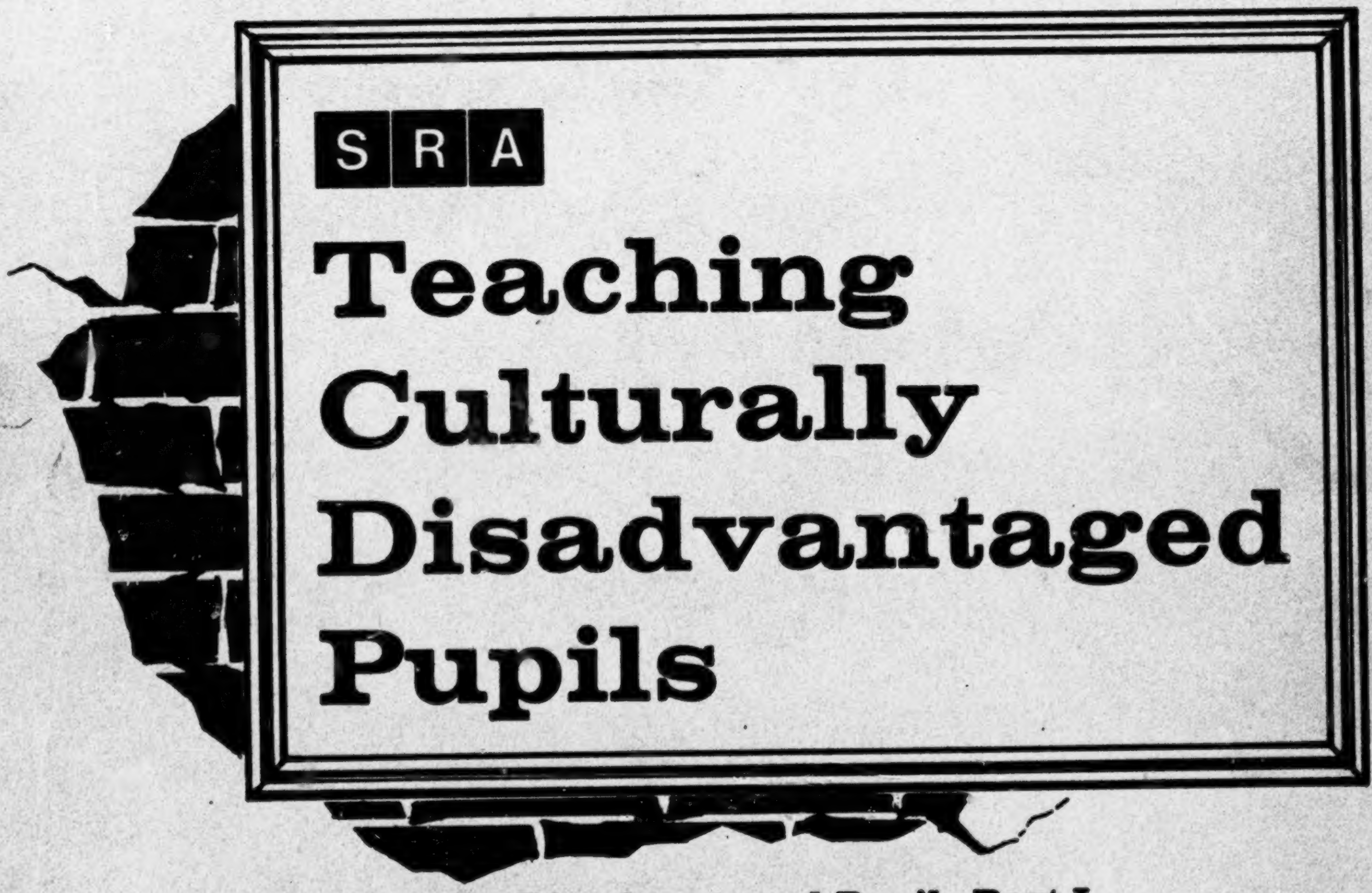

SRA

Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils

The Culturally Disadvantaged Pupil - Part I

ONE-YEAR
SCHOOLWIDE PROJECT
GRADES K-12

By Kenneth R. Johnson

UD005366

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Science Research Associates, Inc., 259 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60

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TEACHING CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED PUPILS

(Grades K-12)

by

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Los Angeles City School Districts

UNIT I: The Culturally Disadvantaged Pupil--Part I

(October 1, 1966)

First of Eight-Unit Series Appearing First of Each Month
From October 1, 1966, Through May 1, 1967

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UD005 366

PREFACE

One of the foremost challenges in American education today is that of educating the culturally disadvantaged pupils. To help them achieve in school, it is necessary for educators to understand them and their problems. This SRA extension service, Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils, for grades K to 12, is specifically designed to help teachers understand the culturally disadvantaged, to offer suggestions and techniques for teaching the culturally disadvantaged, to stimulate thought and promote discussion among teachers of the culturally disadvantaged, and to serve as a guide to the really valuable writing and research on the problem. For several years, SRA extension services have been used by thousands of educators as a framework and background resources for monthly in-service meetings, emphasizing study of problems related to classroom teaching.

This series, Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils, is being offered for the first time in 1966-67. Each monthly unit deals in a concise, nontechnical manner with one phase of the subject. While this extension service is primarily designed for use in in-service education meetings, its comprehensive coverage and many practical suggestions for regular classroom teaching can also be valuable for private study by individual educators.

The following units are included in this series for 1966-67:

UNIT ONE: The Culturally Disadvantaged Pupil--Part I (October)
UNIT TWO: The Culturally Disadvantaged Pupil--Part II (November)
UNIT THREE: The Culturally Disadvantaged Negro Student (December)
UNIT FOUR: Other Culturally Disadvantaged Groups (January)
UNIT FIVE: Teaching the Culturally Disadvantaged Pupil--Part I (February)
UNIT SIX: Teaching the Culturally Disadvantaged Pupil--Part II (March)
UNIT SEVEN: Improving Language Skills of the Culturally Disadvantaged (April)
UNIT EIGHT: Improving the Reading and Writing Skills of Culturally Disadvantaged Students (May)

The author of this series is Mr. Kenneth R. Johnson, Consultant, Division of Secondary Education, Los Angeles City School Districts, Los Angeles, California. For the past year he has specialized in the problem of educating the culturally disadvantaged, particularly the problems of teaching language and reading. He has conducted numerous institutes and lectures on the disadvantaged student at teacher workshops, conferences, and the colleges and universities in the Los Angeles area.

Born in a disadvantaged area of Chicago, the author worked in the post office for five years and served two years in the army before attending college at Wilson Junior College, Chicago Teachers College, and the University of Chicago (B.A., M.A.). He has done graduate work at San Jose State

College, and is currently enrolled in the doctoral program at the University of Southern California. All of his teaching experience has been in schools that had culturally disadvantaged populations.

We urge the school administrator or other educator receiving this extension service on Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils to assign to some one interested and competent person or committee in your school the responsibility for making the best use of each unit.

The booklets in this extension service will arrive about the first of each month, October through May. This issue contains Unit One. We hope it will provide valuable help and practical information to those involved in education.

Mary Margaret Fisko
Project Editor

Paul T. Kosiak, Director
SRA Educational Services

October 1966

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UNIT ONE: THE CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED PUPIL--PART I

PART I: INTRODUCTION

One of the major problems of American education today is to help the culturally disadvantaged pupil achieve in school in spite of his impoverished background. The problem is particularly acute in the large cities of America--New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Cleveland, Philadelphia. A couple of years ago James B. Conant referred to these pupils as ". . . social dynamite in our large cities." Conant's label was prophetic: the fuse burned out in Watts, California, and that pathetic little subsociety exploded, revealing all its painful problems in a three-day conflagration. The flames of Watts illuminated all the terrible potential for destruction Conant had predicted; and in the glare of the flames, America saw the reflection of the same kind of potential in its other cities. The fuse is burning short all over America.

The prophesy of Conant now applies to the medium-sized cities of America, and there are even hints of it in small towns and rural areas. Thus, the kind of population unit--city, town, or country--does not diminish the potential for tragic reaction by a socially frustrated and culturally disadvantaged group. It can happen anywhere that has a part of its population who cannot share in the benefits of our society because of their limited cultural background.

Not all areas that contain those groups who are "without" will experience the same kind of explosion that happened in Watts. Perhaps in some areas the explosion will occur over a long period of time, inaudible to America's ears. Instead of a sudden upheaval, the "population without" will quietly explode, like a controlled fission, into a "quiet desperation." In this case, the population gives up, surrenders to circumstances, and accepts its position at the bottom of the social barrel. One suspects that this process has already occurred over and over again throughout America. Indeed, teachers who work with culturally disadvantaged children see evidence of this every day in the classroom; giving up is just as tragic a reaction as striking out blindly and violently at the imperceptible causes of deprivation. These pupils must be diverted from a predictable course which leads to human waste and tragedy, and education must replace impoverished background as the rudder. But, education can act as a rudder only if some basic changes occur in the cultural and social environment of these pupils. Obviously the population referred to as the culturally disadvantaged needs its economic base strengthened; it needs better housing; it needs protection from exploiting merchants and cancerous installment snares; it needs to be free of segregation and discrimination; it needs the removal of all the repressive forces in our society that consciously and unconsciously keep the culturally disadvantaged at the bottom of our American society.

These are the real needs of the culturally disadvantaged. Most of all, the culturally disadvantaged population needs to have the concern of America. It needs to know that America cares. Then the fuse of violence will be extinguished, and the latent energy of this group will be redirected toward socially useful, self-satisfying goals. When America cares, America will act. Then, the culturally disadvantaged will emerge from their stultifying surrender to "quiet desperation" or lose the potential for explosive social destruction. The classroom is the ideal place for American society to show its concern and initiate action through its agent, the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher may be the only personal link many of these pupils have with the dominant American culture. Teachers who work with these pupils must make a commitment to help these pupils take their rightful place in our American culture. They have been cheated too long. There is plenty of evidence that America does care: federal, state, and local governments have initiated programs to meet many of the real needs of the culturally disadvantaged listed above; private industry and organizations have initiated additional programs to help the culturally disadvantaged. However, these efforts to improve the status of the culturally disadvantaged will be wasted without the catalytic role of education. Education is a necessary process in meeting the needs of a rapidly developing, complex industrial society; and the culturally disadvantaged must be a part of this society.

The efforts that must be made to educate the culturally disadvantaged are vast. Is America willing to make the effort? The answer is yes. The increasing concern of educators for the culturally disadvantaged, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the education programs in the anti-poverty legislation, the increased efforts by states and local districts throughout the country to initiate specific programs for the culturally disadvantaged, and the rising production of instructional materials by publishers indicate that America has accepted the challenge of educating the culturally disadvantaged.

The Problem

America really has no choice: the challenge of educating the culturally disadvantaged has to be accepted. First of all, our complex society needs the latent abilities of the disadvantaged that can be developed through education. Secondly, a democratic society cannot function properly without all its people being educated, as Thomas Jefferson pointed out during the formation of our country; the dignity of any human being must not be eroded by ignorance--our tradition of humanism compels us to accept the challenge. Finally, education rather than ignorance should guide human behavior.

But accepting the challenge of educating the culturally disadvantaged does not point out ways of successfully meeting the challenge, and this is the problem. Many teachers do not have the training, the knowledge, or the tools to work with the culturally disadvantaged pupil. They need help. They need to know the available, workable tools they can employ to break the cycle of failure in which the culturally disadvantaged pupil is caught. The pupil is born into a culturally impoverished background which inhibits learning, limits achievement, restricts his social and vocational opportunities, and keeps him at a culturally impoverished level. He marries, has children, and they repeat the cycle. This cycle is what Robert J. Havighurst calls "the culture of inherited poverty." The problem for the classroom teacher and the school is to break this cycle.

Urgency of the Problem

Time is running out. We have already wasted a great deal of it by refusing, until recently, to recognize the problem. To realize how negligent American education has been in facing the problems of teaching the culturally disadvantaged, one has only to examine the issues of the Encyclopedia of Educational Research over the past twenty years. Up to 1960 there is scarcely any mention of the culturally disadvantaged student.

How times have changed! During the past few years the amount of research, writing, proposals, conferences, etc., pertaining to the education of the culturally disadvantaged pupil has increased so much that one can hardly keep up with it. In fact, all this attention may produce the dangerous situation of teachers "tuning out" these voices of concern, much as the culturally disadvantaged pupil "tunes out" the ubiquitous noise in his environment or the teacher's voice during a reading lesson. In other words, neither teacher nor pupil will be able to discriminate between meaningful sounds and unimportant noise.

Another reason educators no longer neglect the problem of educating the culturally disadvantaged is that this population is increasing. It is difficult to give an accurate number of pupils who cannot achieve in school because of their cultural background, because income is usually the only criterion used for identification. That is, families below a certain income are classified culturally disadvantaged; but the level of income which places families in the classification of the culturally disadvantaged is often determined by legislation, and it fluctuates according to the purpose and content of the legislation or the amount legislative bodies are willing to spend. This method of classification does not support accuracy or consistency. Poverty is a primary contributing cause of cultural deprivation, but there are also some culturally disadvantaged families that earn an adequate income to supply necessary material needs. Thus, there is no accurate count.

All authorities--sociologists, educators, government officials--agree that the population of the culturally disadvantaged is increasing, especially in the cities. Some authorities have estimated that the culturally disadvantaged pupil will be 50 percent of the public school population in many cities (a few cities have already passed this figure). The number, by itself, isn't really that important. What is important is that there is a growing number of pupils in our schools who cannot profit from the education process.

The layman can even recognize the problem and realize its urgency. In the past, the white, middle-class American (a member of the "in crowd") was rarely conscious of groups, even his own. He is America--others are outsiders. Ask any white, middle-class American what it feels like to be white and middle-class and live in America. He will be unable to give you a clear answer, and he may not even understand the question. It's like asking fish what it's like living in water. However, ask any Negro, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, American Indian, Appalachian white a similar question: what does it feel like to be--and live in America? Any member of any one of these groups can give a clear lengthy answer. The white, middle-class American has finally heard these groups, and especially the disadvantaged of these groups. He is aware of their problems--specifically, their education problem--because the mass media has given these problems significant coverage. He may have even driven through the slums, unable to avoid their spreading blight, or he may have glanced over his shoulder at the advancing periphery of the ghetto as he fled to the suburb. The times are ripe for action.

The action must be immediate, massive, and moving. The culturally disadvantaged represent not only a tragic waste of human beings, but a threat to the survival of our security and our democratic society, even though they are a small minority in the total population. They are like blind Samson who asked to be led to the main supporting pillar of the temple of his oppressors and, with the last strain of concentrated energy, pulled the whole temple down upon himself and his oppressors. The culturally disadvantaged are blind Samsons, and their ignorance may strike at the supporting pillars of our society. Education must give them enlightenment.

PART II: PURPOSE OF THIS SERIES

A great deal of nonsense has been written about teaching the culturally disadvantaged pupil--some of it by educators who have never taught or worked with these pupils, but too much of it by educators who have taught and worked with these pupils. Educators who have never taught culturally disadvantaged pupils should be excused for the nonsense they have written; but educators who have taught these pupils should have known better. For example, the literature on teaching the culturally disadvantaged is filled with "drum and tambourine" reports of how zealous teachers have achieved immediate, monumental and miraculous results after some "new" approach in teaching the disadvantaged pupil has been used--with loving application. It's all right for teachers to love pupils--especially disadvantaged pupils, who sometimes receive too little of it--but concern for disadvantaged pupils is a much more effective response by teachers to their needs. Love is emotional, but concern is rational. Some problems cannot be solved by an emotion such as love. This does not mean that teachers should not feel an empathy for these pupils, or have affection for these pupils. They must, if they are going to work effectively with them. Love is just too strong an emotion, too intellectually restrictive, to get mixed up in the kind of uncluttered rational approach needed to solve the problem of educating the disadvantaged. In addition, just because an approach is "new" does not ensure its effectiveness. Education seems to be affected with frequent periodic attacks of "fad-itis." Too many teachers have jumped on pedagogical bandwagons as they rolled across the education scene, leaving the pupils behind. What is needed is more basic research to find out what really works with the culturally disadvantaged pupil.

Research and evaluation sections of school districts have been responsible for some of the nonsense about educating the disadvantaged. They have reported some shockingly fantastic results after disadvantaged pupils participated in special programs that were based on poor experimental designs. Many of these reports are symptoms of "fad-itis." However, it's a special kind of "fad-itis" with financial complications: Money has a way of making all new programs "successful." Research and evaluation sections are too often afraid to admit to a tightfisted superintendent and board of education that something new had failed. This is not to imply that they are dishonest. It's just another case of expectations determining results. We all can be victims of it--even the classroom teacher. Thus, teachers must try to be objective when evaluating new approaches or programs.

Educators sometimes refuse to recognize that discovering the failure of a new approach or program can be profitable also. It lets educators know what doesn't work, what not to do. There are, however, reports of many good programs and techniques that have been tried. Teachers can usually separate the good from the bad on the basis of the amount of caution and the lack of missionary zeal a report contains.

The most prolific authors of nonsense about teaching the culturally disadvantaged pupil, however, are textbook publishers and producers of instructional materials. If teachers take them at their word instead of with a grain of salt (as most teachers do), culturally disadvantaged pupils will achieve remarkably (especially in reading) and even experience a change in attitudes and behavioral patterns. All that teachers have to do is use the textbooks and materials the publishers produce and attractively advertise. Too often, publishers have presented their regular material as material designed specifically for the culturally disadvantaged pupil, and the advertising veil of incredible claims aids the masquerade. There are some good materials available, however. The best way to find out if a certain instructional material is effective is to ask another teacher who has tried it.

It would be wonderful if educating the culturally disadvantaged pupil were as easy as it is sometimes reported. Unfortunately, the task is not easy, and there is no magic available to teachers when working with these pupils. Educating culturally disadvantaged pupils is terribly difficult and painfully slow. However, the truly professional teacher is rewarded: achieving success with these pupils is a patent reinforcer to one's own self-concept.

Lacking a depth of research on which to base practice, wading through saccharine reports which give no help, and flooded by a deluge of publishers claims too incredible to warrant serious attention, where can the classroom teacher of the culturally disadvantaged pupil turn for help? One source of help is the really valuable writing and research on the problem. Again, it must be stated that not all of it has been bad, and some of it has been outstanding. One of the purposes of this series is to include a bibliography with each of the eight units on the topics covered in that particular unit. These bibliographies will contain references which should be helpful to classroom teachers of culturally disadvantaged pupils.

Another purpose of the series is to help teachers acquire some understanding of the groups of culturally disadvantaged pupils who are in the classrooms of America's schools. Understanding these pupils is a good teaching tool, and effective teaching cannot be done without it.

A third purpose of the series is to offer suggestions and techniques for teaching the culturally disadvantaged pupil. All of these suggestions and techniques have been tried by successful classroom teachers of culturally disadvantaged pupils. Still, what works for one teacher may not work for another teacher--or for you. Or, suggestions and techniques may have to be adapted to individual personality and "teaching style," and to the particular situation.

A fourth purpose of this series is to stimulate thought and promote discussion among teachers of culturally disadvantaged pupils. This, perhaps, is the most important purpose of the series. The problem of educating these pupils can only be solved by intensive and intelligent involvement of interested teachers.

Finally, an overall purpose of the series is to help teachers improve human relations and understanding among all who are engaged in the dynamics of the education process from kindergarten through the twelfth grade.

PART III: OVERVIEW OF THE CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED PUPIL

Up to this point, the term "culturally disadvantaged" has been used many times and no precise definition has been given. Actually, there is no precise definition of the term--there are many definitions. However, there seems to be a kind of ironic universal understanding of the term as meaning those pupils who can't "make it" in school because of their impoverished backgrounds.

There have been many attempts to formulate an accurate descriptive term to apply to these pupils. All attempts have failed because of one inadequacy or another in each definition. For a time, many terms were being used. Now most educators have settled for "culturally disadvantaged."

Other terms that have been used (and are still being used) are: culturally deprived, culturally different, socially different, educationally deprived, culturally handicapped. There are others; however, the term is not really important. It _is_ important for teachers to understand the concept these terms inadequately label.

One great difficulty with all the terms that have been coined is that they connote only the negative aspects of a group rather than all the aspects of a group. The words disadvantaged, deprived, different, handicapped, impoverished are all negative terms. As Frank Riessman has pointed out, the culturally disadvantaged have some positive qualities.[1] None of the terms used to label them connote these positive qualities (Riessman prefers "culturally deprived," with apologies). The term "culturally disadvantaged" will be used throughout this series.

The Meaning of the Term "Culturally Disadvantaged"

Sir Edward Tylor in 1891 defined _culture_ as: ". . . that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."[2] This definition of culture probably satisfies most sociologists and anthropologists. The professional assigns a much broader meaning to the term than the layman. To the layman, _culture_ means "opera, symphony, painting, sculpture, poetry, and philosophy"; in other words, culture refers to the "higher things" in life. The layman uses the word _cultured_ to convey the idea of

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[1] Frank Riessman, _The Culturally Deprived Child_ (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962).

[2] Edward Tylor, _Primitive Culture_ (London: John Murray, 1891), p. 1.

"cultivated" or "refined." The professional refers to "all that man has learned as an individual in a society--it is a way of life, a way of acting, thinking, and feeling." Thus, no person who is a member of a society can be without a culture. One group's way of life may differ from another group's way of life, but every group has a culture.

The terms used to label the culturally disadvantaged are inaccurate because they imply a lack of a culture. Furthermore, it is not possible to place a value on any culture--that is, labeling one culture better than another. The culture--or way of life--of a group is the group's way of coping with the physical and social environment. Presumably, things in the culture that "don't work" would never develop, or if they did develop, they would soon be discarded. Thus, some of the puzzling actions of the culturally disadvantaged would not be so puzzling to others if the function of these actions could be determined. (Some of these puzzling actions pertaining to the teaching-learning situation will be examined in later units.)

The term culturally disadvantaged, then, is a relative term. Teachers must always consider this question: when is the culturally disadvantaged pupil at a disadvantage? The answer is surprisingly simple: the pupil is at a disadvantage when he leaves his primary, cultural, socioeconomic group to function in the dominant culture; and he is at a disadvantage when his culture and the dominant culture clash as he tries to cope with life. In these situations, the subculture of the disadvantaged pupil is a handicap. Since this happens regularly (every day in the classroom) it is not surprising that the culturally disadvantaged lead in many types of mental illnesses.

But it was stated above that if a particular action did not help the members of a culture adjust effectively to their environment, then that action would be discarded. The validity of this statement stands up if one realizes that the dominant culture sometimes does not permit the individuals of a subculture to drop an action, or behavioral pattern, or an attitude. For example, the lack of a positive self-concept in Negroes is definitely considered self-destructive. But our society--the dominant culture--makes it difficult for the culturally disadvantaged Negro pupil to change his self-concept from negative to positive. Almost every day society gives him examples of the low esteem it has for Negroes--his individual worth is inferred from these examples. After a time many conform in action and attitude to the low expectations society has for them. One of the main tasks of the school is to help culturally disadvantaged pupils develop a positive self-concept.

Another example will illustrate the relative nature of the term. The culturally disadvantaged pupil is disadvantaged when he attempts to communicate with the "outside world." Many disadvantaged pupils speak a nonstandard dialect of English which limits their capabilities of communication in the dominant culture; yet they must rely on their nonstandard dialect if they wish to communicate in their own cultural environment. This same kind of conflict occurs when the behavioral patterns that help the culturally disadvantaged pupil function smoothly in his own environment backfire when he employs them in the dominant cultural environment.

A pupil is also disadvantaged when his particular background of experiences does not enable him to be sensitive to those cues of the dominant culture that call for a particular response. A simple example will make this clear. Many disadvantaged pupils learn few table manners in their homes. When food is served, the primary objective is to eat it, not to practice accompanying acts of etiquette that are sometimes unreasonable and always indigestible. Thus, the disadvantaged pupil is not sensitive to "cues of the table," and he may appear crude to the outside observer. However, if he practices middle-class table manners in his home, he will probably go hungry, since the other members of his family will waste no time consuming food while he practices manners. The assumption of the dominant culture is that the family sits down at the dinner table and eats as a *unit*, but there is ample evidence that shows that many culturally disadvantaged families eat in individual shifts.

Finally, teachers can perhaps understand the pupil's disadvantaged position *and* the relative nature of the term if they can imagine themselves in the disadvantaged pupil's cultural environment. Most teachers would be "culturally disadvantaged" if they had to go into Chicago's Negro ghetto or an Appalachian village or the Mexican-American east side of Los Angeles and "make it." Imagine what a disadvantage it would be for the average middle-class teacher to have all those around him speaking to him in a different language; to try to function socially with people behaving differently from what he is accustomed to, and operating within a value system that is topsy-turvy from his own.

If teachers can project themselves into the worlds of the various disadvantaged groups they might begin to understand the pupils and develop sympathy for their problems. Teachers who can do this will also understand that the term culturally disadvantaged is relative to *space* and *time*. Perhaps disadvantaged pupils should develop the same sort of awareness of their own situations. With such awareness, they may then be taught *alternate patterns of behavior to employ in appropriate situations*. They don't have a choice now. Revealing this choice is a responsibility of the classroom teacher.

A definition of the term *culturally disadvantaged* (as used in this series) is "anyone who cannot participate in the dominant culture." Another definition is "one who is handicapped in the task of growing up to live a competent and satisfying life in American society." A definition from the viewpoint of the teacher is "the child who has difficulty achieving in school because of his background."

There are many reasons that prevent an individual from participating in the dominant culture: it can be a lack of certain kinds of experiences, inability to speak standard English, the color of one's skin, the origin of one's ancestors, one's geographical location, economic impoverishment--any or all of these reasons (and there are more) can prevent one from participating in the dominant culture. Thus, the individual is culturally disadvantaged. It should be emphasized that all pupils who are culturally disadvantaged do not lack the mental capacity to become "advantaged." This is true in spite of the below average IQ of this group. Their IQ scores are a symptom, not a cause.

Poverty seems to be the unifying thread of the culturally disadvantaged concept. It is true that many of the culturally disadvantaged are also economically disadvantaged, but culture is not equivalent to physical environment. Culture is not bad housing or dirty streets or dingy clothes or a hungry stomach. Culture, as has been stated, is traditions, mores, values, institutions--a way of life. Thus it is possible to be poor but not culturally disadvantaged. Conversely, it is possible to be financially secure but culturally disadvantaged. Usually, however, culturally disadvantaged are also economically disadvantaged. Poor people need a strong economic base to improve their overall status, but money alone won't help them to develop a middle-class way of life. Education is a necessary process to improve the opportunities of the culturally disadvantaged for full participation in the dominant culture.

There are degrees of cultural deprivation. That is, not all culturally disadvantaged pupils are disadvantaged to the same degree and kind. No two individuals can have the same background of experiences--or the same lack of experiences in their background. Thus, individuals vary according to the degree they can participate in the dominant culture; and individual disadvantaged pupils vary according to the degree they can achieve in the middle-class curriculum. For example, pupils who can be classified as disadvantaged can vary in their facility to use and understand standard English, in the amount and quality of the types of experiences they have had which facilitate and supplement learning in the middle-class school, in their acceptance or rejection of middle-class values, or finally, in their conceptual development growing out of environmental stimulation. Further, the degree that pupils can vary in one or all of the criteria of cultural deprivation covers a wide spectrum. The important point is that their cultural background, in one way or another, and to a lesser or greater degree, handicaps them in their efforts to achieve in school.

The difficulty with a label like "culturally disadvantaged" is that it does not allow for the above differences. It says nothing about the variations in degree. It's a generalization and, like most generalizations, it suffers from inaccuracy. About the only generalization that can be made about the culturally disadvantaged pupil is that each one is an individual. No two are alike. They share certain characteristics, they all are handicapped in some way by their background, but each is an individual. Every classroom teacher must remember this.

Groups Commonly Considered Culturally Disadvantaged

"Minority groups" and "culturally disadvantaged" are not synonymous terms. However, there is a relationship between cultural deprivation and minority group membership. One's chances of being culturally disadvantaged are increased if one is a member of a minority group. Minority individuals have not yet achieved their rights of full participation in society as groups. However, many of them are rapidly moving closer to this goal. The concern here is for those minority individuals who are standing still and may even be moving backward. There is evidence that the gap between the dominant culture and the subcultures of disadvantaged minorities is widening.

Perhaps as many as 50 percent of those not enjoying full participation in the dominant culture are Caucasian. But these Caucasians (those who are culturally disadvantaged) are only a small percentage of the total white population; while the percentage of Negroes, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and American Indians not enjoying full participation in the dominant culture are a large percentage of the total populations of these minority groups. In racial and ethnic terms, the main groups that are culturally disadvantaged are:

1. Negroes in the rural South and in the black ghettos of our cities and towns. Their problems are particularly acute in Northern cities.

2. Mexican-Americans in the rural Southwest and West and in the cities of these areas. Many have recently migrated from Mexico.

3. Puerto Ricans in a few large Northern cities. Many have recently migrated from Puerto Rico.

4. Caucasians in the rural South and Appalachian Mountains. Some Caucasians from these areas have migrated to Northern industrial cities.

5. American Indians in the Southwest and West on reservations and in the cities of these areas.

6. Other ethnic groups include European immigrants, Cuban immigrants, Eskimos of Alaska. (Since these groups are so small, they will only be briefly mentioned.)

In the following units, substantial space will be devoted to the first five groups. Unit Three will deal exclusively with teaching the culturally disadvantaged Negro pupil, and Unit Four will deal with teaching culturally disadvantaged Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, Caucasian, and American Indian pupils.

Although these groups share many general characteristics, each has its own specific characteristics that make the problem of teaching each group unique. For example, the culturally disadvantaged Negroes have a history of segregation and discrimination growing out of slavery; Mexican-Americans have a cultural background which is not native to the United States; the Southern and Appalachian whites have been geographically isolated from the dominant culture. Each of these ethnic groups has developed a subculture of its own. That is, each has developed its own way of life to cope with the environment. Furthermore, the repressive forces from the dominant culture (social and economic discrimination, segregation, inherited poverty, geographical isolation) and the subcultures these groups have developed combine to make it extremely difficult for individuals of these ethnic groups to attain full participation in the dominant culture.

Milton M. Gordon has pointed out three functions of the subculture that seem to help perpetuate the disadvantaged way of life: the subculture gives its members identification; the subculture provides a patterned network of groups and institutions which allows an individual to confine his primary group relationships to his own ethnic group; the subculture refracts the dominant cultural patterns of behavior and values through the prism of its own cultural heritage. The last function is interesting because it points out that the subcultural groups must change the patterns of behavior and the values of the dominant culture to fit their own particular way of life (which is an adjustment to their cultural isolation). But in changing the patterns of behavior and values they become more unlike the dominant cultural groups, thus decreasing their chances of acceptance.

Teachers who work with the culturally disadvantaged pupils of these ethnic groups are more likely to increase the effectiveness of instruction as they grow in understanding of the particular group or groups they teach. This is the reason this series deals separately with various ethnic groups of culturally disadvantaged pupils. Too often, these groups are lumped together without recognition of the uniqueness of their problems.

PART IV: EDUCATING THE CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED PUPIL-- ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

The curriculum assumes that every child who enters school has a middle-class orientation and a middle-class background of experiences. Since the culturally disadvantaged pupil has neither a middle-class orientation nor a middle-class background of experiences, the standard curriculum begins to operate against him the day he enters school. To make matters worse, many classroom teachers often demand that the culturally disadvantaged pupil adhere to the expectations of the curriculum. If the pupil doesn't, he is made to feel that something is "wrong" with him. The problem is: change the child or change the curriculum. This problem will be covered directly.

First, the reasons the culturally disadvantaged pupil is unable to achieve success in the curriculum must be examined. Some of these reasons have already been mentioned. At this point, it is necessary to look at them more closely.

The disadvantaged pupil comes to school with a background of experiences that does not prepare him to successfully achieve in school. At the time of entering kindergarten or first grade, the effects of his impoverished background begin to operate. The family life of the disadvantaged pupil has failed to prepare him for his encounter with the dominant culture. He may have been prepared for his particular subcultural environment--that is, he may know a nonstandard dialect "adequately," he may have learned to be aggressive, to ignore noise, to detect a threatening attitude in another, to shift for himself, etc.--but his family has not given him the experiences the curriculum expects of all children. And the curriculum begins instruction on the foundation of these expected experiences.

The expected experiences include adequate standard English; rudimentary time and quantity symbols; and general information about the where, what, and how of things the dominant culture values. The culturally disadvantaged pupil has gotten none of these from his family or cultural environment; thus, he starts school already behind. If he is expected to catch up, he must work at a faster than normal rate. But this is not usually possible: the impoverished background that causes him to be behind also prevents him from progressing at a faster than normal rate (or even a normal rate). The culturally disadvantaged pupil seldom catches up. In fact, some investigators have suggested that he falls farther and farther behind as he grows older. Too often, he just gives up completely and drops out of school.

Recently, there have been many programs to begin schooling earlier for disadvantaged pupils (the "Head Start" movement is the most notable of these early schooling programs). These programs have been initiated on the assumption that the school can provide the missing experiences that are necessary for achievement. Perhaps these programs are a partial answer to the problem of adequately preparing the disadvantaged preschool pupil. However, there are some additional, basic material needs of the culturally disadvantaged that must be met before these pupils can match the achievement of middle-class pupils. These basic needs were mentioned above and, until they are satisfied, the difficulties in educating the culturally disadvantaged are compounded. Many of these basic needs are not satisfied because of the economic impoverishment of the disadvantaged pupil. It will be difficult for these pupils to profit from the middle-class curriculum or develop middle-class patterns of behavior until their economic base is substantially improved.

Educators tend to define basic needs in terms of what makes their job easier or what keeps the curriculum static. In other words, they tend to define basic needs in terms of curriculum expectations. Visit the slums of Harlem, the "black belt" of Chicago, the rural wastelands of the Southwest, the sharecropper country in the South, and then tell the disadvantaged pupil that his basic needs are to have more experience with books, more adult conversation, better manners, more trips to the zoo, or any of the other prizes of middle-class affluency. These are educational needs.

Specifically, what are the basic needs of the culturally disadvantaged?

The culturally disadvantaged pupil needs an income level that will permit him and his family to live at a comfortable level. The disadvantaged need adequate housing, freedom from the exploitation of absentee landlords and merchants; they need to be freed from all the invisible forces which keep them locked in the "cycle of poverty." They need improved health facilities, better neighborhoods, better police protection, freedom from segregation--the list of basic needs could go on and on. The basic needs can be summarized as conditions that must be met or conditions that must be absent to permit the individual to develop culturally without negative factors operating to retard or limit that development.

The school never really comes to grips with these basic needs. The schools refuse to face the reality of deprivation. Of course, the schools can't satisfy these needs, and perhaps this is one of the reasons they are almost completely ignored when the curriculum and the child meet. Coming to grips with these needs does not mean satisfying them, and this is not the recommendation here. However, the school can give disadvantaged pupils (especially secondary disadvantaged pupils) more help in dealing with these needs. In other words, the school could help the pupils face the realities of deprivation and some of the conditions which accompany deprivation.

For example, in one Los Angeles high school social studies class the greatest "social problem" of the girls was getting home without being insulted by the "winos" who bunched on the corners. Their second "social problem" was trying to avoid the sexual advances of older men who accosted them from cruising cars. The greatest problem of the boys was resisting the dope peddlers in the school neighborhood. Where in the curriculum are these pupils given help to deal with these kinds of problems? And where in the curriculum are pupils given help to meet all the other pressing needs of their bleak environment? The schools could offer more help to pupils in dealing with such needs. The schools could give more training in how to survive in a hostile environment.

Instead, the problems of cultural deprivation are seldom dealt with in meaningful and direct ways. The pupils are seldom given help in ways to overcome immediate pressing problems. In a social studies unit on "Problems of Our Society," the same high school class mentioned above was studying such topics as surplus food, inflation, citizen participation in service organizations, extreme political groups, and other topics far removed from the real concerns of the pupils. In fairness it must be pointed out that the class also studied some topics that were relevant to the pupils' situation. However, the class did not tackle the problems of greatest concern to the boys and girls in the class. These boys and girls needed to know methods of making absentee landlords conform to minimum building safety codes; they needed to know how to organize for power to make city hall improve some of the conditions in the neighborhood; they needed to know how to read an installment buying contract to protect themselves and their families from economic exploitation. The school, located in the center of a disadvantaged area, gave no real help in solving these problems of our society. This situation points out what is meant by the phrase "refusal to face the reality of deprivation."

The culturally disadvantaged pupil probably feels that the school is either naive, apathetic, or dishonest in its refusal to come to grips with his obvious problems and handicaps. The school should not forget that success in meeting *educational* needs and attaining educational objectives is affected by the extent these *basic* needs are either satisfied or ignored. Thus, the school should do whatever it can to help pupils satisfy basic needs. Admittedly, the school can do almost nothing in the way of direct satisfaction--but it can do more than it is presently doing in *indirectly* satisfying the basic needs of the culturally disadvantaged pupil.

Beginning school without the background of experience necessary for achievement, and getting little help throughout his school career for meeting basic needs, the disadvantaged pupil *feels* that the curriculum operates against him. He may not be able to verbalize his feelings; instead, his feelings are reflected in his negative reactions to the curriculum.

Finally, there is an important curriculum question implied in this whole discussion of "basic needs" of the culturally disadvantaged pupil: can the schools make *any* progress in the face of such enormous undermining forces? The answer is yes, and the validity of this answer is measured by the many pupils who *have* succeeded in becoming full participants in the dominant culture.

How does the school help the disadvantaged pupil succeed? The question of whether to change the child or change the curriculum was left hanging. A partial answer is how the school helps the culturally disadvantaged pupil succeed is contained in the answer to this second question.

Implications for Education

The impoverished background of the culturally disadvantaged pupil has been given as the reason for nonachievement in the middle-class oriented curriculum. It is obvious that the school cannot change the background of the pupil. Thus, the school has to accept the pupil and change the curriculum to fit the pupil. The curriculum must be based on the culturally disadvantaged pupil's background of experiences, even though it does not conform to the expectations of the school.

The word "impoverished" has been used to describe the experiential background of the disadvantaged pupil. This word is not entirely accurate. A better word is "different." The relative nature of the concept of the culturally disadvantaged is operative when a qualitative word is used to describe the pupil's background. The disadvantaged pupil probably has as many experiences as the middle-class child, but his experiences are different. Still, there is some truth in the implication that experiences of the disadvantaged are different in quality. Many psychologists feel that disadvantaged pupils do not have the kinds of experiences that develop the particular conceptual foundation necessary for school success. The impoverished environment in which they are raised does not provide stimulation to develop the cognitive skills or experiences out of which concepts are formed. The curriculum fails to recognize this lack and is not based on the disadvantaged child's different experiences. But why shouldn't it be? Many of the objectives of the curriculum can be accomplished by basking instruction on his experience rather than the middle-class child's experience. Achievement, of course, depends on other factors also (motivation, attitudes, "learning style," health, emotional state, etc.), but at least changing the curriculum can be a first step in helping the disadvantaged pupil succeed.

The change in the curriculum--adapting methods, materials, activities to the experience of the culturally disadvantaged pupil--must begin with the classroom teacher. In the following units, suggestions for making these changes and using the experience of the disadvantaged pupil will be included.

The education process is like a bridge. It spans the gap between where the pupil is and the goals of the curriculum. But bridges are anchored at both ends, and one of these ends is embedded in the culturally disadvantaged pupil's experience. Thus, the teacher has no choice: the crossing must begin with the disadvantaged pupil's experiences.

The IQ Problem

In spite of all the limitative factors, culturally disadvantaged pupils can learn. This may seem like a naive statement or an overly optimistic statement, depending on one's reaction to the foregoing. Still, the statement is valid: they can learn.

Many disadvantaged pupils, in fact, are using the schools as a means to prepare themselves for full participation in the dominant culture. As teachers learn more and more ways of working effectively with disadvantaged pupils, and as more and more of the limitative factors in their environment are removed, education will increase its effectiveness in helping disadvantaged pupils.

It has been pointed out that not all disadvantaged pupils are disadvantaged to the same degree. Thus, the limitative effect of their backgrounds on achievement varies according to the degree of deprivation. Secondly, not all pupils are affected in the same way and to the same degree by their disadvantaged backgrounds. Some pupils coming from backgrounds of equal deprivation will fail to achieve according to their capabilities, while others will equal or surpass their achievement expectations. Finally, some disadvantaged pupils are inately bright. Their intellectual capacities compensate for their disadvantaged backgrounds and permit them to achieve at a satisfactory level.

One of the greatest educational needs of the culturally disadvantaged is a change in attitude of the teachers' expectations of them. Teachers can begin making this change by accepting the fact that disadvantaged pupils can learn. The IQ score is probably responsible for the myth that disadvantaged pupils can't learn. Too often, the IQ score is looked upon as an absolute measure of a pupil's intellectual capacity.

The weakness of IQ tests is revealed when the assumptions behind IQ testing are examined. First, IQ tests assume that innate intelligence (rather than learning) can be measured simply by inference from the amount or lack of success an individual has in performing certain tasks. Second, IQ tests assume that individuals can perform more and more difficult tasks as they grow older, and that successful performance can be interpreted as showing intelligence. Third, IQ tests assume that there are "standard" tasks that all individuals learn at about the same times throughout their development and that an individual's intelligence can be judged by comparing his performance with the average performance of all individuals of his age. In the following discussion on IQ tests, the inaccuracies of these assumptions and the manner in which they penalize the culturally disadvantaged pupil will be examined.

If one recognizes that psychologists have not yet come up with an agreeable definition of what intelligence is, then it can't really be validly measured. At best, intelligence tests measure achieved functional capacity, not innate intellectual capacity. The IQ score really tells nothing about an individual's native intelligence.

However, the IQ score does tell something about how much an individual has learned in comparison with those of his same age group. Not only does it tell how much an individual has learned, but it also tells what the individual has learned. That is, the tests are made up of items the test makers assume have been learned by the average individual at a particular age level. Since we live in a middle-class society, these items are the expected learnings of middle-class individuals. The tests are also standardized on this group. Thus, IQ tests are biased. When a culturally disadvantaged pupil takes an IQ test he is penalized by his background. His background has not provided him with the experiences needed to perform as well as the average middle-class pupil.

Most IQ tests given in schools are group tests that must be read by the individuals when taking them. IQ tests are a kind of reading test. Many culturally disadvantaged pupils are not good readers. They generally do better, but not as well as middle-class pupils, on individual tests and so-called performance tests where reading skills are not as important.

Closely related to reading ability in taking IQ tests is the kind of vocabulary the pupil has. Many culturally disadvantaged pupils speak a nonstandard form of English or they come from families who speak a foreign language. They do not perform as well as middle-class pupils on items requiring linguistic skills.

There are certain cultural factors which adversely influence the IQ test scores of culturally disadvantaged pupils. These factors include attitudes toward the content of the test items and attitudes toward taking tests. Many of the situations, objects, and problems are not a part of the disadvantaged pupil's culture in the same way as they are a part of the middle-class pupil's culture. For example, in one of the questions given to Terman's gifted sample, pupils were asked to pick the correct description of policemen from the following: they have it in for kids; they are glad to help you out; it is fun to fool them; they are just big bluffs. Many culturally disadvantaged pupils would miss this item if they are not bright enough to know what the test maker is looking for. Their real feelings, derived from their culture, would be much different. Middle-class pupils would not have to make this kind of choice.

Culturally disadvantaged pupils also don't have the same kind of attitude toward taking IQ tests as middle-class pupils. Taking a test can be, to many of them, just another school task. They are not motivated to achieve when taking the test as middle-class pupils are. This has been given as one of the reasons culturally disadvantaged pupils do poorer than middle-class pupils even on so-called culturally unbiased or culture-free IQ tests.

The IQ test is not a measure of an individual's innate intellectual capacity. Then, why give them? This question has bothered educators for quite a while. The New York City schools no longer give schoolwide IQ tests, and many other systems are considering this move. Some educators point out that the IQ test is a good predictor of school achievement. This may have some truth for middle-class pupils, but it has none for culturally disadvantaged pupils: they do poorly in school and on the IQ test for the same reason. Their impoverished background is a good predictor for both IQ test score and school achievement. Perhaps IQ test scores are not needed for culturally disadvantaged pupils except to show how far they are behind middle-class pupils. This would give an indication of how far the schools have to take them to bring them up to the general level of the population. Some educators feel that IQ tests cause more harm than good, especially with the culturally disadvantaged.

Teachers of culturally disadvantaged pupils should not take the IQ test scores of these pupils too seriously, and certainly not as a measure of their innate capacities. The IQ test score has tended to stigmatize the culturally disadvantaged pupil as a nonlearner. Perhaps teachers should look upon the IQ test score as a measure of the pupil's handicap, thus accepting the pupil where he is and proceeding from this point in the teaching of the culturally disadvantaged.

PART V: PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING THE CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED

In the preceding pages the emphasis has been on understanding disadvantaged pupils. In this section some of the factors relating to the teacher of the disadvantaged will be discussed to determine how these factors contribute to effective teaching. The factors that will be discussed are the teacher's attitude, the importance of understanding the nature of learning, and the role of the teacher in working with the disadvantaged. Finally, the question of whether the culturally disadvantaged pupil wants to be educated will be discussed.

The Teacher's Attitude

One of the greatest educational needs of culturally disadvantaged pupils is for teachers to have a positive attitude toward them. Too often, classroom teachers have concluded that these pupils cannot learn. Admittedly, teaching these pupils is a difficult and trying task. However, it is not impossible. The stigmatization of culturally disadvantaged pupils caused by their generally low IQ scores has been pointed out in the previous section and this is the first trap teachers must avoid to keep from developing negative attitudes.

However, there are other traps. Many teachers attempt to teach disadvantaged pupils the standard curriculum without adapting it to the pupils' particular background of experiences, their needs, or their interests. An instructional program that is not based on the experiences of the pupils or does not meet their needs and interests is doomed to failure from the start. In fact, such a program may incite a sort of "intellectual rebellion" in which students ignore the efforts of the teacher and refuse to learn. When this occurs, many teachers conclude that the pupils simply are incapable of learning. Instead, a reexamination of the curriculum may be in order.

A problem closely related to this that causes many teachers to "give up" on disadvantaged pupils is the inadequate textbooks teachers must use with disadvantaged pupils. Much has been written and stated, lately, about the strange world with strange people speaking a strange language that many textbooks present to disadvantaged pupils. These textbooks are totally unsuited to disadvantaged pupils. The problem of inadequate and inappropriate textbooks seems to be more serious at the elementary level than at the secondary level.

Thus, presenting a curriculum that has little relation to the backgrounds or needs of disadvantaged pupils and trying to work with inadequate and inappropriate textbooks, contribute to the poor success of disadvantaged pupils. Their inability to succeed creates frustrations in many of their teachers; and teacher frustration changes to apathy or negative attitudes toward the pupils.

When teachers develop an attitude of expected failure, this attitude can be communicated to the pupils. When it is, pupils are apt to live "up" to these expectations. Understanding disadvantaged pupils and the problems of educating them will help teachers avoid the kinds of negative attitudes that aid failure. Perhaps, this understanding will help teachers develop the kind of professionalism needed to face the problems of educating culturally disadvantaged pupils positively and with confidence. This is the only attitude that will produce success.

The Nature of Learning

Most psychologists define learning as a change in behavior caused by experience. How learning takes place and what conditions must be present before learning takes place is one of the great controversies in psychology and a source of confusion for the classroom teacher. Faced with competing theories and findings often more applicable to rats and monkeys than to children, teachers have very few practical applications of understandable learning theory to apply in the classroom. The problem of using learning theory and findings for direction in teaching the culturally disadvantaged is especially acute because so little research has been conducted on the specific learning problems of disadvantaged pupils.

However, there are some general principles of learning that provide direction for classroom teachers. These general principles are listed below with implications for teaching culturally disadvantaged pupils.

1. An individual learns from his own experience. This has been one of the main points of Unit One, and it is the basis for the appeal to change the curriculum of the school to begin instruction at the culturally disadvantaged pupil's level.

2. An individual must interact with his environment to learn. The teaching-learning act is a partnership; however, it's not what the teacher does that produces learning in the pupil, but what the teacher leads the pupil to do. Teachers must plan learning activities that yield the kinds of experiences that will attain the objectives of the curriculum. In addition, when teaching culturally disadvantaged pupils, teachers must provide the kinds of activities that yield those experiences the pupil has not had in his cultural environment.

3. There are two kinds of experiences that produce learning: direct and indirect. Direct learning involves actual contact with reality. Indirect learning involves vicarious contact with reality, usually

through lecture or reading. The lecture method is especially ineffective with culturally disadvantaged pupils. A number of investigators have concluded that the particular "learning style" of culturally disadvantaged pupils is not attuned to the lecture method of instruction. Also, the younger the child or the more inexperienced the learner, the more direct the experience must be.

4. The quality of learning is determined by the quality of the experience.

5. The quality of the experience is dependent on other factors: interest and motiviation; concentration; breadth of stimulation; variety of stimulation; and the level of intelligence of the learner.

Motivating the culturally disadvantaged pupil is the crucial factor in providing quality experiences. Many of these pupils have learned to live by reduced needs and satisfactions, and motivating them to achieve is difficult. Learning and the "better life" through education do not excite these pupils to participate in activities that will provide quality experiences. Teachers must convince these pupils that learning is important and constantly reward them to encourage their participation. Also, culturally disadvantaged pupils (especially those on the secondary level) must be convinced that a better life is attainable through education.

In the following units, specific ways of providing quality experiences for culturally disadvantaged pupils will be suggested.

The Role of the Teacher

The classroom teacher is the most important factor in the education of culturally disadvantaged pupils. Recently, there has been an increase of interest in teaching machines, programed learning, and other teacher-substitute devices. Some educators have suggested that these devices provide a means of educating culturally disadvantaged pupils. They can serve a valuable supplementary function; however, it is naive to suggest that these devices can take over the primary role of the teacher, particularly in educating culturally disadvantaged pupils. There can be no substitute for the teacher's role in educating culturally disadvantaged pupils. Essentially, the role of the teacher has three functions: he is a link with the dominant culture; he acts as a model for the disadvantaged learner; and he initiates, directs, and evaluates learning experiences.

The classroom teacher is usually the only meaningful and direct link with the dominant culture. Through the teacher, the culturally disadvantaged pupil may confront the dominant culture and increase his understanding of the dominant culture without the distorting effects of "culture clash." In his role as a link with the dominant culture, the classroom teacher can bring the disadvantaged pupil to understand the benefits of the dominant culture. The classroom teacher can provide the kinds of activities which give the disadvantaged pupil experiences middle-class children receive automatically as members of the dominant culture. Finally, this function of the classroom teacher's role gives the disadvantaged pupil a kind of guide to conduct him into the dominant culture.

The second function of the classroom teacher's role in educating the culturally disadvantaged pupil is that of a model. The function is particularly important in helping the disadvantaged pupil develop language skills. The classroom teacher may be the only person with whom many of these pupils come into contact who speaks standard English. The classroom teacher also acts as a model for general behavioral patterns and values of the dominant culture.

The classroom teacher's third primary function is to initiate, direct, and evaluate learning experiences. Initiating learning experiences requires the teacher to be aware of the kinds of experiences the learner needs--in other words, the classroom teacher must know where to start. Once this has been identified, the teacher must then motivate the pupil to become involved in the activities that will provide the desired experiences. Once the learner becomes involved in the activities, the teacher keeps the learner focused on the activity, offers information, explanation and interpretation, provides materials, and frequent encouragement and reward to sustain the activity so that it yields a quality experience. Finally, the classroom teacher must evaluate the learning experience.

The function of the classroom teacher in initiating, directing, and evaluating the learning experience is basically the same if he is teaching culturally disadvantaged pupils or middle-class pupils, elementary pupils or secondary pupils. However, in teaching the disadvantaged pupil, diagnosis and readiness is more critical at the point of initiation. In conducting learning experiences, the importance of the classroom teacher as mediator between the disadvantaged pupil and the environment, materials, and other stimuli is greater.[1] That is, the teacher must provide more explanations, more interpretation, more encouragement and reward. In evaluating the learning experience of disadvantaged pupils, the teacher must not become discouraged with small gains.

Finally, we come to the question of whether disadvantaged pupils want to be educated. At times, their actions and attitudes seem to indicate that they do not. We must remember, however, that they are products of a background that has conditioned them one way--that is, they have never really had a choice between actions and attitudes that support education and actions and attitudes that reject education. The schools must give them this choice.

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[1] Thomas J. Edwards, Learning Problems in Cultural Deprivation, Paper read at the Tenth Annual Convention of the International Reading Association. Reprinted by Science Research Associates, Inc., Chicago.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT POINTS

1. The problems of educating the culturally disadvantaged have received increased attention.

2. The number of culturally disadvantaged pupils is increasing.

3. There is no accurate definition of the term "culturally disadvantaged."

4. The term "culturally disadvantaged" is a relative term.

5. The culturally disadvantaged pupil is handicapped by his background; his background limits his chances for success in school.

6. Minority groups have a disproportionate number of culturally disadvantaged pupils.

7. Poverty seems to be the unifying thread in the concept of cultural deprivation. However, it is possible to be poor and not culturally deprived or conversely, culturally deprived and not poor.

8. The curriculum of the school assumes that all pupils have a middle-class background of experiences and a middle-class orientation.

9. School success of the culturally disadvantaged will be retarded until some of their basic needs are met.

10. The school never really comes to grips with the reality of deprivation.

11. The curriculum needs to be changed to make success easier for culturally disadvantaged pupils.

12. Cultural deprivation adversely affects IQ scores.

13. Culturally disadvantaged pupils can learn.

14. The role of the teacher in educating the disadvantaged has three functions: the teacher is a link with the dominant culture; the teacher is a model; and the teacher initiates, directs, and evaluates learning experiences.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why is it necessary that the culturally disadvantaged pupil be educated?
2. What kinds of problems in educating the disadvantaged need to be researched? What are some of the questions that need answering?
3. Give a definition of the term (or concept) "culturally disadvantaged."
4. Try to give a better term for the concept of "cultural deprivation."
5. Why are minority group individuals more likely to be culturally disadvantaged?
6. Point to specific expectations of the curriculum which assume a middle-class background.
7. List additional basic needs of the culturally disadvantaged pupil.
8. What can the school do to give the culturally disadvantaged pupils more help in solving some of the pressing problems in their subculture?
9. What changes need to be made in the curriculum to bring it in closer touch with the experiences of the culturally disadvantaged pupil?
10. How can IQ tests be used meaningfully in educating the culturally disadvantaged pupils?
11. What additional functions could be added to the role of the teacher in educating culturally disadvantaged pupils?
12. How can an understanding of the disadvantaged pupil increase the teacher's effectiveness?

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Unit Two

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SRA

Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils

The Culturally Disadvantaged Pupil - Part II

ONE-YEAR

SCHOOLWIDE PROJECT

GRADES K-12

UD 005 366

By Kenneth R. Johnson

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(Grades K-12)

by

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Los Angeles City School Districts

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(November 1, 1966)

Second of Eight-Unit Series Appearing First of Each Month
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PREFACE

One of the foremost challenges in American education today is that of educating the culturally disadvantaged pupils. To help them achieve in school, it is necessary for educators to understand them and their problems. This SRA extension service, Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils, for grades K to 12, is specifically designed to help teachers understand the culturally disadvantaged, to offer suggestions and techniques for teaching the culturally disadvantaged, to stimulate thought and promote discussion among teachers of the culturally disadvantaged, and to serve as a guide to the really valuable writing and research on the problem. For several years, SRA extension services have been used by thousands of educators as a framework and background resources for monthly in-service meetings, emphasizing study of problems related to classroom teaching.

This series, Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils, is being offered for the first time in 1966-67. Each monthly unit deals in a concise, nontechnical manner with one phase of the subject. While this extension service is primarily designed for use in in-inservice education meetings, its comprehensive coverage and many practical suggestions for regular classroom teaching can also be valuable for private study by individual educators.

The following units are included in this series for 1966-67:

UNIT ONE: The Culturally Disadvantaged Student--Part I (October)
UNIT TWO: The Culturally Disadvantaged Student--Part II (November)
UNIT THREE: The Culturally Disadvantaged Negro Student (December)
UNIT FOUR: Other Culturally Disadvantaged Groups (January)
UNIT FIVE: Teaching the Culturally Disadvantaged Student--Part I (February)
UNIT SIX: Teaching the Culturally Disadvantaged Student--Part II (March)
UNIT SEVEN: Improving the Language Skills of the Culturally Disadvantaged (April)
UNIT EIGHT: Improving the Reading and Writing Skills of Culturally Disadvantaged Students (May)

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Born in a disadvantaged area of Chicago, the author worked in the post office for five years and served two years in the army before attending college at Wilson Junior College, Chicago Teachers College, and the University of Chicago (B.A., M.A.). He has done graduate work at San Jose State

College, and is currently enrolled in the doctoral program at the University of Southern California. All of his teaching experience has been in schools that had culturally disadvantaged populations.

We urge the school administrator or other educator receiving this extension service on Teaching Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils to assign to some one interested and competent person or committee in your school the responsibility for making the best use of each unit.

The booklets in this extension service will arrive about the first of each month, October through May. This issue contains Unit Two. We hope it will provide valuable help and practical information to those involved in education.

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Project Director

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UNIT TWO: THE CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENT--PART II

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Summary of Important Points in Unit One

The concept of the culturally disadvantaged pupil was developed in Unit One. The main points in Unit One were: the cultural background of some pupils does not adequately prepare them to successfully achieve in school; the curriculum assumes that all students have a middle-class background of experiences and a middle-class orientation; the curriculum must be changed to account for the impoverished background of culturally disadvantaged pupils, and some of their basic needs must be satisfied before they can successfully achieve in school; the purpose of educating culturally disadvantaged pupils is to help them participate in the dominant culture. The emphasis in Unit One was on the conditions of cultural deprivation. In Unit Two the emphasis will be on the product of cultural deprivation: the culturally disadvantaged pupil.

Emphasis of Unit Two

The culturally disadvantaged pupil is the product of a way of life--a culture--that has developed to cope with a particular kind of social and economic environment. The social and economic environment has forced him and others like him to develop a way of life that places them at a disadvantage whenever they encounter the dominant culture and whenever they attempt to participate in the dominant culture. Acutally, more than one of these kinds of subcultures has developed.

Individuals who are products of these subcultures have certain general characteristics that distinguish them from individuals who are products of the dominant culture. The significant word in the previous statement is general. This word is significant because not one subculture but many subcultures have developed. Examples of these subcultures are those developed by the Negro, the Mexican-American, the Appalachian white, and the American Indian. Each of these subcultures has developed individuals with specific characteristics; however, there are some general characteristics that culturally disadvantaged pupils from these subcultures (or ethnic groups) share to a greater or lesser degree, and these general characteristics are emphasized in Unit Two. In later units, the specific characteristics of individuals who are products of particular ethnic subcultures will be discussed. The other area of emphasis in Unit Two is the "learning style" of culturally disadvantaged pupils.

Throughout this unit and later units, the aim will be to emphasize information that is most helpful to the classroom teacher in working with disadvantaged pupils. Always, the discussions will be conducted from the point of view of how teachers can improve the chances of success for disadvantaged pupils.

PART II: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED PUPILS

The general characteristics discussed below were implied or mentioned in Unit One. They are discussed in more detail here. These are general characteristics of culturally disadvantaged pupils and, again, it is emphasized that not all culturally disadvantaged groups will exhibit these characteristics equally. For example, aggressiveness is a general characteristic of culturally disadvantaged pupils. However, culturally disadvantaged American Indian pupils are usually not aggressive, culturally disadvantaged Appalachian white pupils are moderately aggressive, while many culturally disadvantaged Negro students are extremely aggressive--especially if they live in the Northern ghettos.

Further, within groups the adherence to a particular characteristic will vary. In Unit One it was pointed out that there are degrees of cultural deprivation--that is, not all individuals from a particular subculture are disadvantaged or handicapped by their environment to the same degree. Thus, disadvantaged individuals within a particular subculture will vary in the degree they are identified by the characteristics. These characteristics are generalizations, and like the term culturally disadvantaged (which is a generalization) they, too, are not accurate.

All these qualifications preceding the discussion of general characteristics imply that culturally disadvantaged pupils are more heterogeneous than middle-class pupils. Perhaps their heterogeneity compounds the problem of educating them. Much of the literature on educating culturally disadvantaged pupils has not given the proper emphasis to the differences in various culturally disadvantaged groups. Instead, the literature has focused on the similarities. This lack of emphasis on differences--perhaps a better term is uniqueness--has carried over into some of the programs that have been devised for disadvantaged pupils, and this may account for the disappointing success or dismal failure of many compensatory programs.

The general characteristics of culturally disadvantaged pupils have been identified by many investigators. Often these general characteristics are grouped under broad headings, such as social characteristics, psychological characteristics, and economic characteristics. This kind of grouping is convenient in cataloging the general characteristics, but it is not necessarily accurate. No general characteristic can be labeled exclusively social or psychological or economic--the characteristics are too interrelated. Still, grouping is sometimes helpful to understanding. However, the general characteristics of culturally disadvantaged pupils are not grouped under broad headings here. Grouping implies that a characteristic is inclusively restricted to a particular label. Instead, characteristics will be identified, discussed, and the educational implications pointed out in the order that seems most consistent with what has been previously discussed in Unit One, and what will be discussed in following units.

All these characteristics reveal deficiencies that have educational implications. In addition, many of the deficiencies will not be fully corrected until the basic needs of culturally disadvantaged pupils are satisfied. For example, a general characteristic which is common to all culturally disadvantaged pupils, regardless of their ethnic or subcultural background, is that they have an impoverished background of experiences that is translated as failure in the school culture. This general characteristic was covered in Unit One and, because it is an inclusive characteristic, it is implied in all the others. But the enrichment of culturally disadvantaged pupils' experiential backgrounds depends on the satisfaction of basic needs. Culturally disadvantaged pupils can't acquire the experiences that supplement education and meet the expectations of the curriculum until the basic economic and social needs are met--in other words, until they are freed of the preoccupation with survival. These two points--satisfaction of basic needs and the impoverished background of experiences--cannot be overemphasized. Nothing is more important to understanding and appreciating the problem of educating culturally disadvantaged pupils, or to successfully educating culturally disadvantaged pupils than realizing and constantly focusing on these two points. With this in mind, the discussion of the general characteristics of culturally disadvantaged pupils can begin.

Many Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Have a Rural Background

The majority of white and American Indian culturally disadvantaged families live in rural areas. Also, many Negro and Mexican-American culturally disadvantaged families live in rural areas. They scratch out an existence on meager farms as owners or sharecroppers, barely living better than the barnyard animals who share their poverty. Children born in the culturally barren rural regions of the United States (the South, Appalachia, the Southwest) grow up in an environment that offers minimal educational experiences and stimuli and maximum hardship. Often their geographical isolation does not bring them into contact (or conflict) with the dominant culture, and they don't realize how disadvantaged they are. Those who remain in a culturally disadvantaged rural environment do not have the same kinds of problems as the disadvantaged living in the cities.

But the problems of having grown up in a disadvantaged rural environment are compounded when people from rural environments move to the cities. Most leave the farms to improve their economic status. There has always been a steady stream of deprived rural families flowing into the large cities; however, since World War II the stream has swelled to flooding proportions. The rural South and Puerto Rico have been main tributaries to the flood of migrants to Northern urban centers. Individuals who have spent their formative years in culturally barren rural areas do not easily adjust to an urban environment. The "life style" developed on the farms is inadequate for successful adjustment in cities; also, the educational and vocational experiences of rural immigrants do not qualify them to meet the employment needs of cities. For example, the new problems of living closely together creates friction; sanitation requirements of urban living are not really understood; the rush of urban life is foreign to their style; finally, the complexity of urban living is sometimes too much for disadvantaged individuals from a rural background, and they become even more disadvantaged from their inability to cope with urban living. In addition, urban living brings them into proximity with the dominant culture. The resulting conflicts and problems add a dimension to their impoverished lives that they did not have to deal with "back on the farm."

Pupils from a disadvantaged rural background entering school are unable to compete even with their disadvantaged cousins who have lived in the city most or all their lives. The higher the grade level they enter school, the greater the discrepancy between their achievement and the general achievement of urban school populations.

The generalization that disadvantaged pupils have a rural background is probably the most accurate of all the generalizations that can be made regarding their characteristics. Even disadvantaged pupils born in cities have a rural background. Many urban disadvantaged families are only one or two generations away from the farm. The disadvantaged of visible minority groups live in areas of the city overwhelmingly populated by other members who share their ethnic identity and similar background. Segregated living patterns tend to perpetuate some elements of the rural culture. For example, the food carried in stores and supermarkets located in areas occupied by disadvantaged groups reflects the rural diet of the population. In Southern rural areas, the church is the main social institution of Negroes. Usually, the congregation is small, enabling every member to have a primary relationship with every other member. This kind of rural pattern is reflected in the great number of small storefront churches found in the Negro ghettos of Northern cities. Thus, even though disadvantaged populations are physically in an urban environment, they retain many of their rural patterns of living.

Some of these patterns have little effect on the performance of the pupil in the school. However, other patterns of behavior stemming from a rural background operate negatively, and the schools must work to change these patterns. For example, pupils must learn that the concept of time and observing time schedules are important in urban living; pupils must learn that attendance laws are more strictly enforced in urban school districts; pupils must learn to observe sanitation and health practices necessitated by living closely together; and pupils must learn the "dialect of the city," even if they don't abandon their rural dialects. The language many disadvantaged pupils speak probably reflects the perpetuation of rural patterns in an urban environment more than anything else. The language of disadvantaged Negroes or Appalachian and Southern whites living in cities is much closer to their rural dialects than to the language of the city.

Up to this point, the problems of urban disadvantaged pupils with a rural background have been emphasized. The reason is that their problems are more acute than the problems of disadvantaged pupils living in rural environments. However, both groups are equally handicapped in a middle-class oriented curriculum. Also, the curriculum of the schools more and more reflects the change that has occurred in our society from predominantly rural oriented to overwhelmingly urban oriented. Textbooks are prime examples of this shift in orientation. In this sense, all rural pupils are disadvantaged--even those who are not victims of material impoverishment. Research on the achievement differences between rural and urban pupils has significantly established that urban pupils generally do better on achievement tests, even if the groups are matched on all variables (IQ, age, socioeconomic class, race, etc.). An important function of the school is to provide the experiences missing from a rural environment that supplement and facilitate school learning.

Finally, the implication that a rural background is not as good as an urban background is certainly not intended. The core values of our society and much of what we consider the "good life" stem from our rural foundations. However, vestiges of a rural society no longer applicable to a shifting, complex, industrial urban society can severely handicap many individuals--especially when these individuals leave their rural areas for city living. This is the case with many culturally disadvantaged pupils.

Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Are Usually "Inheritors of Poverty"

Poverty is the unifying thread of cultural deprivation. Usually the word poverty means economic poverty only. However, when applying the word to culturally disadvantaged pupils, there are many more dimensions to poverty than the economic dimension (although economic poverty is the prime contributing cause of those other dimensions). These dimensions of poverty are educational poverty, spiritual and moral poverty, experiential poverty, and aspirational poverty. Furthermore, culturally disadvantaged pupils are often members of families having a legacy of poverty extending over two, three, or more generations. These pupils are "inheritors of poverty."

In the preceding section it was pointed out that many disadvantaged families move to cities to improve their economic status. However, their educational impoverishment, their experiential impoverishment, and their cultural impoverishment combine to make economic advancement impossible. Those who remain in the rural areas, and the disadvantaged living in the cities produce children who will grow up and inherit all the dimensions of poverty that have kept their parents in the empty basement of society. Robert J. Havighurst, referring to economic poverty, has called this process the "cycle of poverty." A more accurate term for this process is "cycles of poverty."

One of these cycles is the cycle of moral and spiritual poverty. Culturally disadvantaged pupils learn the morals and values of their families. Often the moral standards and values of their families are in conflict with the moral standards and values of the dominant culture. However, these pupils cannot discard their moral standards and values easily--they are products of their environment. If they remain in their impoverished environment, their children will learn the same conflicting standards and values. For example, many welfare workers in large cities have pointed out that the number of unwed mothers who receive aid to dependent children is increasing because girls who are raised on this system tend to duplicate the actions of their mothers. A new generation of "inherited illegitimacy" is created, particularly in the Negro population.

Another cycle of poverty is the cycle of aspirational poverty. Culturally disadvantaged pupils grow up in an environment that does not foster high aspirations. Disadvantaged pupils are surrounded by social failures; they constantly hear the "talk of poverty"--unemployment, hardship, sickness, imprisonment; they suspect how others feel about them from the tragic situation in which they find themselves. They do not set their aspirations very high. Consequently, many never escape from the culture of poverty. When they become adults they pass on this "heritage" to their children, and the cycle of aspirational poverty continues. Helping culturally disadvantaged pupils to raise their aspirations is one cycle the schools can help break.

The cycle that has the most significant implications for the school is the cycle of educational poverty. Culturally disadvantaged pupils often come from families that have known less than one or two generations of literacy. Often, literacy means the ability to barely read and write. Pupils do not learn the values of education from their families, and they do not see the results of education operating in their homes. Furthermore, their parents do not have a good understanding of the educational process. Because of economic strains and the lack of education, the parents of culturally disadvantaged pupils do not own books, provide newspapers or magazines in the home, or participate in activities that supplement education. Thus, many culturally disadvantaged pupils grow up in a home environment that is both economically and educationally deprived. These pupils do not inherit good attitudes toward education from such an environment. When the culturally disadvantaged pupil enters kindergarten, the school begins the slow painful process of trying to break this cycle.

Sometimes disadvantaged families are able to break the cycle of economic poverty. Times get better, the income increases, and basic material needs are adequately met. However, the inherited educational cycle of poverty still operates: these families do not spend extra money, after basic material needs are met, on educational activities (books, trips, cultural activities, etc.). Their impoverished educational background has not prepared them to take advantage of a break in the cycle of economic poverty to eliminate other cycles of poverty. Also, there is no assurance that the children of the lucky parents who have broken the cycle of economic poverty will be as fortunate when they grow up as their parents. And if the other cycles are not broken, they will lapse into the traditional cycles of tragedy.

The school can do very little that directly affects the economic status of culturally disadvantaged pupils and their families. However, the school can indirectly affect the economic status of disadvantaged pupils by raising their educational level. And if their educational level is raised, other cycles of poverty will be broken. Thus, of all the cycles of poverty that operate against the culturally disadvantaged pupil, educational poverty is perhaps the crucial cycle to be broken. The cycle of inherited economic poverty is the generator of other cycles of poverty; however, breaking the economic cycle may have little effect on breaking other cycles of poverty. Education is the crucial cycle that must be broken because it gives the individual intellectual and spiritualenlightenment and the economic skills to break the other "cycles of inherited poverty." The federal government and many state and local governments have recognized this, and this is the reason so much money is being invested in educational programs for the disadvantaged. Before these programs can fully succeed, however, many of the basic needs of culturally disadvantaged pupils must be met. This will take time. But time is not an ally: educators must learn how to generate learning in culturally disadvantaged pupils in spite of their limiting backgrounds. This must be done.

Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Feel Rejected by Society

Culturally disadvantaged pupils learn very early that they are caught up in the cycles of poverty. From this realization, they develop feelings of rejection by society. Their feelings of rejection are not altogether unwarranted: our society has rejected them. However, our society now recognizes the tragedy of human waste that accompanies rejection. Massive efforts, particularly in education, are being made to eradicate the accumulation of past tragedy and to prevent future tragedy. This effort must be transmitted to create change in culturally disadvantaged pupils from kindergarten through high school.

In Unit One it was suggested that culturally disadvantaged pupils need the concern of society. It should be added that they must also be conscious of this concern. The classroom teacher is the culturally disadvantaged pupils' primary contact with the society, or the dominant culture. Thus, the classroom teacher is the primary agent of society to make culturally disadvantaged pupils conscious of this concern. If the classroom teacher is successful, culturally disadvantaged pupils can replace their feelings of rejection and despair with feelings of hope, and this will be a first step in improving their self-image or self-concept.

Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Have a Poor Self-Concept

Rejection breeds self-doubt and self-blame in the rejected individual. The individual grows to view himself as someone who is worthless. Self-assessment is made in relation to others--that is, the individual uses the collective image of society as a reference point to evaluate himself. The individual makes a qualitative judgment, consciously or unconsciously, as to who he is and what he is. The conclusion he reaches is his self-concept. Self-concept is the image one has of himself. Thus, self-concept is society's popularity contest in which all are entered, and each is his own judge.

Since self-concept is an attitude, it must be learned. Rejection or acceptance is one of many cues that help the individual learn his self-concept. He also develops a self-concept on the basis of cues from his family, his neighborhood, the society, and even the school.

Many disadvantaged pupils come from families that barely qualify to be labeled by the term. Even though the disadvantaged family label does not have the luster or prestige of the middle-class family label, the disadvantaged pupil must still wear it--and he doesn't have to compare his family with the middle-class family to realize that there is something pathologically wrong with his family. The disadvantaged pupil also knows that what his family is, that is what he is. If his family is poverty-stricken in a society that measures success with a financial yardstick--if his family has only one parent in a society where two are normal--if he is raised by a parent, or parents, who have "given up" and think little of themselves in terms of their self-worth--and if his family is caught up in all the cycles of poverty, the disadvantaged pupil can give little value to his family label. Since he wears this label, he can give little value to himself. Thus, his family presents many cues out of its economic and social pathology to help him learn a negative self-concept.

The physical environment of disadvantaged pupils presents other cues to help them develop a negative self-concept. The accumulated rubble and filth of the slums or the empty wastes of rural areas suggest to them that the people who inhabit these places can't be worth very much. All the other negative aspects of their physical environment--the exploitation, the crime, the congestion of the slums or the barrenness of the country, the hostility, the apathy, the total neglect and the isolation--reinforce and perpetuate a negative self-concept.

Disadvantaged pupils receive the most cues from the wider society to help them form their self-concept. Self-concept is an attitude formed on the basis of a relative comparison, and when disadvantaged pupils assess themselves in relation to the rest of society, they learn that there is no one below them. They are at the bottom and every one else is above them. From this, they conclude that they are not as good as others.

The rest of society is their reference point, and television has been one of the most effective means of focusing the reference point clearly. Television helps culturally disadvantaged pupils make the relative assessment necessary to form a poor self-concept. When they compare themselves and their situation to the America depicted on the television screen, they do not measure up to this standard. The wholesome happy people of the commercials romping through affluence also reinforce the negative attitudes disadvantaged pupils have of themselves.

The personal relations these pupils and their families have with other members of society, however, give the most cues and the greatest reinforcement to a negative self-concept. Government officials, law enforcement agents, merchants, and average citizens of the dominant culture all communicate the lack of respect--even contempt--that they have for disadvantaged individuals.

The schools, too, perpetuate and reinforce a negative self-concept. Often, teachers unconsciously communicate attitudes of rejection or superiority or contempt for disadvantaged pupils. Unfortunately, some teachers unwittingly but dramatically "teach" disadvantaged pupils that they are "no good." For example, when disadvantaged pupils don't conform to the values or practices of middle-class culture such as cleanliness, eating breakfast, lack of aggressive behavior, respect for property, keeping schedules, being responsible for homework assignments, etc., teachers often make the pupils feel that they are "bad" or "faulty." This kind of action of teachers is damaging to self-concept. Teachers must realize that because of environmental, economic, and cultural reasons it is impossible for disadvantaged pupils to do many things middle-class people unconsciously do.

Textbooks, like television, provide a relative basis for self-assessment. Many reading textbooks, which present the romanticized middle-class culture and its people in language of praise that implies rejection of anyone who deviates from the description, help form negative self-concepts in disadvantaged pupils. Teachers, of course, give secondary reinforcement to the textbooks.

Growing up in a family that has inherited the cycles of poverty, living in an environment that induces failure, being rejected by society, and being confronted with his own inadequacies in the school--in other words, possessing all the "bad things" of our society--the disadvantaged pupil learns to look upon himself with contempt. Furthermore, his negative attitude of himself is continually reinforced. If he never changes from a negative self-concept to a positive self-concept, he grows up and produces children who develop a poor self-concept, because parents and the family environment they create are primary impressions on self-concept. Thus, poor self-concept is still another cycle of poverty for the disadvantaged.

It is important for teachers to understand the significance of self-concept. If a pupil appraises himself in qualities that are mainly derogatory, he will tend to view the world in the same way. Furthermore, a pupil who views himself and the world in this way will reflect this viewpoint in his actions. The way a pupil views himself is the way he acts: if the pupil views himself as someone who is liked, successful, accepted by his teachers and society, then he will tend to conform to the role consistent with this view; if the pupil views himself as someone who is not liked, unsuccessful, rejected by his teachers and society, then his actions will be accordingly, and his self-concept will be poor. Sometimes his poor self-concept is acted out in aggression toward others or toward himself; sometimes his poor self-concept causes him to suppress any action--he just gives up. In either case, his self-concept "programs" him for expected failure. And since he expects to fail, he does fail--and this only reinforces his feelings of inadequacy and expected failure.

Many culturally disadvantaged pupils never begin the cycle of achievement. That is, their expected failure diminishes their chances to experience achievement success that could generate motivation that produces more achievement success, and so on. Instead, they are in a reverse cycle of achievement: their expected failure generates failure. Furthermore, many culturally disadvantaged pupils don't believe they can learn; one of the main tasks of the classroom teacher is to convince them that they can learn. Before they can be convinced, however, they must experience success. Some assignments should have the opportunity for success built in.

It was pointed out above that teachers unwittingly damage middle-class culture as the standard that measures "good" and "bad." Disadvantaged pupils should be made aware of the different ways that people have developed under different conditions and that individuals of one way of life are not intrinsically better than individuals of another way of life. In other words, disadvantaged pupils should be made aware of the "reality of deprivation" mentioned in Unit One. Disadvantaged pupils--especially those at the secondary level--should be given insight into their status and some of the factors that influence their status. This insight, perhaps, will help disadvantaged pupils relieve some of their frustrations, point out "escape" for them, and help them cope with their problems in a positive manner.

Also, teachers can consciously help develop positive self-concepts in disadvantaged pupils through constantly encouraging them to achieve, communicating an attitude of expecting success instead of expecting failure, and convincing them that they are as good as anyone else, in spite of cues indicating the contrary. Other ways teachers can help disadvantaged pupils form better self-concepts are:

> Treat the pupils as human beings, not as objects one works with. Communicate a feeling of concern for the pupils through classroom activities, not words.
>
> Reinforce all kinds of behavior that reflect positive qualities of self-concept through encouragement and praise.
>
> Reserve a minute or two a week to engage individual pupils in conversation. This will illustrate to the pupil that he is a somebody.
>
> Point out to pupils examples of persons from situations similar to theirs who have "made it."
>
> Make the pupils aware of significant contributions persons from their ethnic group have made in the development of the United States.

Schools have done very little in the area of changing the self-concept of disadvantaged pupils. An examination of the objectives of compensatory programs for disadvantaged pupils reveals that educators recognize the need to change the self-concept of disadvantaged pupils--many compensatory programs list objectives to this effect. However, few compensatory programs outline a program of specific techniques and materials teachers can employ, or activities pupils can do, to attain the objectives. Changing self-concept should receive planned emphasis in programs for disadvantaged pupils. This cannot be accomplished through incidental learning, or by merely listing it as an objective.

Self-concept is the key to human behavior: change an individual's self-concept, and his behavior is changed. A positive self-concept makes success possible, a negative self-concept produces failure.

Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Are Aggressive

One of the products of a poor self-concept is aggression. Aggression is hostility resulting from underlying frustration. An individual who has a poor image of himself grows to hate himself. Also, the individual who hates himself is often hostile toward others, and his hatred breeds aggression.

Aggression builds up in individuals and it seeks an outlet. Sometimes the individual strikes out at others, sometimes he turns his aggression inward and strikes himself. In either case, the individual attempts to inflict punishment. Aggression can explode in a series of individual acts of violence, or aggression can explode in the kind of collective catharsis that produces a Watts, California. Usually, collective explosions of aggression are expressed in teen-age gang warfare or the senseless acts of violence, destruction and delinquincy committed by groups of young people. When aggressive feelings are turned inward, the individual seems to punish himself, perhaps by dope addiction (this is also a means of escaping frustration), or repeated acts which cause him punishment. Often, aggressive feelings are sublimated into positive activities, such as athletics, and the individual releases his aggression through socially acceptable actions. Perhaps this explains the outstanding athletic achievements attained by many culturally disadvantaged individuals. Culturally disadvantaged Negroes, who have the poorest self-concept of any group and the greatest feelings of aggression, have achieved particularly outstanding records in athletics. For example, Negro schools in the big city ghettos consistently win more than their share of championships in sports. This is an example of aggression being sublimated into positive channels.

A poor self-concept produces aggression, but it is not the whole cause of aggression. Aggression is also a natural product of the social environment of culturally disadvantaged pupils. These pupils, who live in an environment populated by aggressive persons, must themselves be aggressive in order to survive. If disadvantaged pupils do not learn to be aggressive--to fight fire with fire--they soon become the object of everyone else's aggression. The term "jungle" is more than a figure of speech when it is used to describe the social environment of the culturally disadvantaged. Furthermore, the disadvantaged child is taught very early to "hit back when somebody hits you." If he doesn't "hit back," his parents will often punish him for not learning the correct responses for a hostile environment. And the parents' form of punishment will be physical, violent, and immediate, a pattern that reinforces the "correctness" of aggression.

Culturally disadvantaged pupils are immersed in an environment of aggression. This is the only pattern they have learned to deal with frustration, disagreement, and hostility. Their feelings of aggression, however, are not always expressed in physical acts; often aggression is expressed verbally in threatening insulting language.

Learning cannot occur in an atmosphere where constant storms of aggression erupt, and the school vigorously discourages overt physical and verbal aggression. The school encourages reason and discourse as a means of dealing with frustration, disagreement, and hostility. Also, the school operates from a middle-class orientation that expects an individual to suppress aggression, especially during encounters with authority. On the other hand, culturally disadvantaged pupils are products of a way of life that teaches and reinforces aggressive behavior. The ways of handling aggression taught by the school often won't work in the pupils' environment. Thus, there is a conflict between the pupils' way of life and the demands of the school in dealing with aggression. It would be interesting to learn the exact amount of time the school uses in attempts to settle the conflict--on its own terms. Here, again, is an example of the school attempting to solve a problem that originates outside the school and is caused by factors over which the school has little or no control. The conflict between the school and disadvantaged pupils over aggression will continue until the social environment of the disadvantaged pupils changes, or until the school can find a means of controlling aggression within its walls. The problem of aggression is linked with the whole problem of conflicting value systems discussed in the next section.

Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Have Different Values

Aggression is just one negative pattern of behavior that is the result of an attitude or belief disadvantaged pupils learn. Disadvantaged pupils learn many other attitudes and beliefs that determine their responses and patterns of behavior (or lack of responses and appropriate patterns of behavior) to particular stimuli. These attitudes and beliefs that determine an individual's preference for one behavioral pattern over another are sometimes called values. Often the values of disadvantaged pupils are in conflict with the values of the dominant culture. Because many of the values of the dominant culture are codified, those disadvantaged pupils whose values deviate greatly from those of the dominant culture are potential or actual delinquents. For example, one value many disadvantaged pupils do not share with the dominant culture is a reasonable and proper respect for legitimate authority. In any confrontation with authority figures, such as policemen, their reactions or behavioral patterns dictated by their attitude toward authority figures cause them trouble. Other examples of conflicting values or lack of values that cause many disadvantaged pupils trouble are their lack of respect for the personal and property rights of others, their inability to understand and observe the rules of common courtesy, their disregard for the personal and property rights of others, their inability to understand and observe the rules of common courtesy, their disregard for the laws of society (i.e., drinking, taking dope, gambling, stealing, etc.). Of course, their differing value system is not the only reason they have trouble or actually break the law; there are many other causes (self-punishment as a result of a poor self-concept, dope addiction to escape their frustrations, satisfaction of primary drives like hunger or warmth, or just plain ignorance of the law). A differing value system, however, is a main contributing cause of the high delinquency rate of disadvantaged pupils.

Not all the values of disadvantaged pupils cause them to come into direct conflict with the law. Too many of their values, however, shut them out of the dominant culture and, until they learn the values of the dominant culture, they will remain shut out. Learning the values of the dominant culture is really *socialization*, or acquiring the patterns of behavior necessary for successful living in society. The school is the only primary *agency of society* actively conducting socialization of disadvantaged pupils. Thus, resolving the conflict of values has become a responsibility of the school.

The tragedy in this conflict of value systems between disadvantaged pupils and the dominant culture is that their values develop inevitably out of their impoverished and hostile environment. For example, how can disadvantaged pupils learn the value of *deferred gratification* if the chances of attaining gratification are slim? How can disadvantaged pupils learn the value of *saving* if there is nothing to save? How can disadvantaged pupils learn the values of *ambition* or *achievement* if their ambition is smothered by a stifling environment? How can disadvantaged pupils learn the value of *hard work for future rewards* if hard work is *not* rewarded in their environment?

Resolving the conflict of values has become a responsibility of the school, and it is an extremely difficult task. In fact, the school has had little success in accomplishing this task--it is something educators constantly *talk* about but rarely achieve with disadvantaged pupils: resolving the conflict involves changing pupils' attitudes and beliefs. The reason little success has been achieved in changing pupils' attitudes--or values--is that the schools have concentrated on *cognitive*, or intellectual, changes in pupils rather than *affective*, or value, changes. *If* attitudes and values determine behavioral patterns that are necessary for intellectual learning in school, then it follows that the school should emphasize *affective* changes in disadvantaged pupils rather than *intellectual* changes.

How can schools teach disadvantaged pupils the values necessary for intellectual achievement and participation in the dominant culture? Everything seems to be working against attempts to do this: the pupils' cultural background, the constant reinforcement of negative values in the pupils' lives, the inability of pupils to live by the positive values the school must teach, the enormous difficulty of the task. Still, it is a responsibility of the schools to teach the values of the dominant culture.

First, teachers should begin in kindergarten making the disadvantaged *aware* of the values of the dominant culture, especially those values necessary for academic achievement. Often, disadvantaged pupils learn of these values too late in their lives to make a change. Second, teachers should make disadvantaged pupils aware of the *advantages* of acquiring these values. Third, teachers should *reinforce* the behavioral patterns from which these values can be inferred. This point cannot be overemphasized. Constant reinforcement is necessary if a behavioral pattern is to be learned. Fourth, pupils should be shown the *conflicts*, where they exist, between their values and resulting behavioral patterns and the values of the dominant culture.

This conflict should be explained as objectively as possible (this is not a contradiction--one can be objective in explaining a value judgment by eliminating the missionary zeal that usually accompanies value judgments). Finally, the approach that should be taken in teaching values is to encourage disadvantaged pupils to employ, in appropriate situations, those behavioral patterns derived from the values of the dominant culture. In other words, since disadvantaged pupils cannot use many of these patterns in their own environment, they should be taught the alternate situations where they do apply (the concept of employing alternate patterns of behavior will be discussed further in later units). The school is certainly the main situation where disadvantaged pupils should employ these alternate patterns of behavior derived from a different value system than their own.

Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Live in a "Negative" Environment

Up to this point, characteristics of the disadvantaged resulting from psychological and social factors have been emphasized. There are other characteristics of disadvantaged pupils resulting from physical environmental factors. Of course, characteristics of disadvantaged pupils are not exclusively the products of separate factors--instead, the characteristics are the result of many overlapping factors; but some characteristics seem to be the result of one factor more than others. Some of the characteristics of disadvantaged pupils that seem to be the result of physical environmental factors are listed in this section.

Culturally disadvantaged pupils live in a "negative" physical environment. The word "negative" is about the best adjective to describe the overall result of their physical environment. Some investigators have called the environment "unstimulating." This label, however, is not accurate; in many ways, the environment presents too many stimuli to disadvantaged pupils (i.e., noise level, crowdedness). Other investigators have called the physical environment "impoverished," and this is certainly an accurate, but inconclusive, label--impoverishment alone does not necessarily produce the characteristics that operate in a limitative way on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Other terms used to label the physical environment of disadvantaged pupils are: "bleak," "ugly," "depressing," "hostile," "debilitating"--there are more. All the terms, however, imply the "negativeness" of their physical environment; thus, this is the term used here.

Their negative physical environment is, itself, a general characteristic of disadvantaged pupils. Out of this negative environment are produced other general characteristics that have implications for the school.

The most striking impression of the physical environment of disadvantaged pupils, whether it is urban or rural, is its incredible ugliness. There is a gloominess of city slums caused by the narrow range of colors they cast. The slums appear to reflect only the colors from the gloomy end of the color spectrum--those buried colors at the ends of the rainbow:

shades of dull browns and dead grays predominate, and the layer of filth that covers everything tints all other colors brown or gray. Nothing seems to stand out. Slums appear as one blob, and they look as if they have been camouflaged to hide the battle for existence that is carried on. The junk, the dilapidated buildings, and the disorganization intensify the impression of combat. The rural areas where disadvantaged pupils live give the same impression: the broken buildings and objects seem to have been flung across the landscape by some destructive force. Even the people one sees in the big city slums and the bleak rural areas of the disadvantaged seem to be battle casualties.

It is amazing what little knowledge outsiders have of the physical environment of disadvantaged pupils. Even teachers who work in schools located in the heart of slums rarely see the totality of the ugliness. They come to the slum schools by the most direct route and leave by the same route, seeing as little of the slum as possible. Teachers who work in slum schools should take a tour of the slum and realize the kind of physical environment from which their pupils come. Instead of driving directly home, they should turn off the regular trail and drive through the canyons of deprivation. If they work in a rural area, they should turn off the highway and take the dusty roads that wind past the barren farms and shacks of the disadvantaged.

The insides of the homes in which disadvantaged pupils live are consistent with the ugliness of the outside. Often, the homes are both empty and crowded at the same time--that is, they are empty of objects but full of people. There is an absence of furniture and other objects of comfort and necessity middle-class people take for granted. Of course, not all the homes of the disadvantaged are this stark. Almost all of them have television sets and the essential pieces of furniture; there is, however, a general paucity of objects in the homes of disadvantaged pupils.

The neighborhoods and homes of culturally disadvantaged pupils are generally ugly, disorganized, dirty, noisy, crowded, and void of the kinds of stimuli that are meaningful in the middle-class environment. In other words, the physical environment of disadvantaged pupils is a negative environment.

Some general characteristics of culturally disadvantaged pupils are mostly the result of this negative environment. Among these general characteristics that have implications for the school are:

> Unawareness of order or oganization--A disorganized organization that offers little experience with order makes chaos the normal situation.
>
> Lack of respect for property--An environment that contains mostly junk and run-down buildings produces a disrespect for property.
>
> Poor attention span--An environment that is disorderly and noisy contributes to the development of a poor attention span; individuals learn to "tune out" all sounds, and when they come to school they are often unable to distinguish between general noise and meaningful sounds.

Disregard for cleanliness--The dirty environment has cuased many disadvantaged pupils to give up the battle against filth.

Finally, the most serious effect the negative environment has on young disadvantaged children is the stultifying effect on their conceptual development. Concepts are abstractions formed through experiences with concrete objects and interaction with the environment. Some investigators feel that if the environment of the young child is impoverished (such as an empty home) then the child will not acquire the concepts necessary for learning in a middle-class oriented school (awareness of colors, relative size, direction, classifications, etc.).

Conceptual development and language development are inseparable. The young disadvantaged child does not receive the language experiences that facilitate conceptual growth. Thus, the young disadvantaged child enters school crippled in both concept and language development. In spite of the emphasis throughout the primary grades, disadvantaged children seldom catch up. The evidence is that they fall farther and farther behind.

In general, the physical environment of the middle-class child automatically provides the stimuli and language experiences necessary for conceptual development. For example, middle-class children have many educational toys and many objects to manipulate, compare, and classify; they have many valuable language experiences incidentally (by just hearing and being spoken to in standard English). In the physical environment of the disadvantaged child these things are lacking. The disadvantaged child could, however, have richer experiences--there are concrete objects in his environment on which abstractions or concepts can be built. But the disadvantaged child needs help in extracting meaningfulness from his environment: there are not enough meaningful things in his physical environment to automatically provide the stimuli necessary for good conceptual development; also, the kind of language experiences that must accompany the stimuli are lacking. If there were a mediator present, however, to select, to point out, to present stimuli, to explain things to the child, an environment with a paucity of objects could still help the disadvantaged child have the necessary experiences. Thus, the absence of a mediator is the crucial factor in a negative physical environment--the physical environment is negative because it does not automatically provide the child with necessary experiences. The negative environment combines with language deprivation to stunt the conceptual growth of disadvantaged pupils.

Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Are "Linguistically Disadvantaged"

Many culturally disadvantaged pupils speak a language that is different from the language of the school. They may speak a nonstandard variety of English; or their English may be influenced by their native foreign language. In either case, their language handicaps them in school achievement. They are "linguistically disadvantaged." Young children from disadvantaged homes are particularly linguistically disadvantaged. Their language development has not been carefully guided like that of middle-class children, and it takes them longer to become proficient in their own language than middle-class children. Thus, they enter school not only speaking a different kind of English but a different incomplete kind of English. Their disadvantage in language continues as they get older. Language skills are the major academic needs of disadvantaged pupils at every grade level.

Because language is so important to academic success, Unit Seven will be entirely devoted to this topic. Language deprivation is briefly discussed here as one of the general characteristics of culturally disadvantaged pupils.

Summary of General Characteristics

Few disadvantaged pupils can be accurately described by the foregoing characteristics. At the beginning of Part II, it was emphasized that culturally disadvantaged pupils can be described by these characteristics in varying degrees. These characteristics are general tendencies, not necessarily actual conditions. In discussing these general characteristics, the differences between disadvantaged pupils and middle-class oriented pupils was inevitably emphasized. The truth, ironically, is that disadvantaged pupils are more like all other pupils than they are different. The tragedy is that there are differences, and these differences are educationally significant.

Throughout the following units, additional general characteristics will be mentioned. The following is a summary of general characteristics discussed in this unit. In general, disadvantaged pupils:

--Have an impoverished experiential background

--Have rural backgrounds

--Are economically impoverished

--Are inheritors of poverty

--Are caught up in "cycles of poverty" that perpetuate spiritual and moral, aspirational, educational, and economic poverty

--Feel rejected by society

--Have a poor self-concept

--Are aggressive

--Do not adhere to the values of the dominant culture--often, they are unaware of these values

--Live in a negative environment that is ugly, crowded, filthy, noisy, and disorderly

--Have poor attention spans

--Have poor conceptual development

--Are linguistically disadvantaged

Finally, there is one very important general characteristic that must be stated (and it is the most accurate of all): culturally disadvantaged pupils are capable of learning. Don't be fooled by the bleak picture painted here in Part II--too many culturally disadvantaged pupils have proved, in spite of tendencies toward these characteristics (above) in greater or lesser degree, that they can acquire the learning that helps them reverse the tendencies. It has happened many times. Often one teacher has been the force to reverse one tendency that started a chain reaction of reversals of other tendencies.

PART III: THE LEARNING STYLE OF CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED PUPILS

The psycho-social characteristics of pupils from a disadvantaged culture cause these pupils to develop a particular learning style. Learning style refers to the particular way individuals learn. The learning style of culturally disadvantaged pupils does not complement the orientation of the curriculum. In other words, their learning style places them at a disadvantage in the curriculum.

In Unit One it was suggested that the curriculum be adapted to disadvantaged pupils' particular background of experiences, their needs, and their interests. This kind of change in the curriculum involves a change in content. Another change should accompany the change in content--this change involves methods. Methods of instruction should be adapted to fit the particular learning style of disadvantaged pupils. A change in methods--or adapting instruction to the particular learning style of disadvantaged pupils--should be temporary and transitory, however. The learning style of culturally disadvantaged pupils is not efficient. Their style is slow, physical, nonverbal, problem centered, and concrete oriented. Their learning style at all grade levels is the learning style of the young child. This might be one of the reasons to explain the "achievement gap." The older disadvantaged pupils are, the greater the achievement gap between them and middle-class pupils: disadvantaged pupils are unable to make the transition from the inefficient learning style of the young child to the more efficient learning style of older pupils. The curriculum, however, assumes this change, and teachers should constantly work to help disadvantaged pupils acquire the learning style that is efficient and mature. This learning style is verbally oriented, problem and content centered, able to deal with abstractions, present, past, and future oriented, able to work for future reward and gratification, and speedy. Until disadvantaged pupils acquire this style, instruction should be adapted to their particular style.

The learning style of disadvantaged pupils operates within the framework of the general principles of learning discussed in Unit One. These general principles of learning are:

1. An individual learns from his own experience.
2. An individual must interact with his environment to learn.
3. There are two kinds of experiences that produce learning: direct and indirect.
4. The quality of learning is determined by the quality of the experience.

5. The quality of the experience is dependent on: interest and motivation; concentration; breadth of stimulation; variety of stimulation; and the level of intelligence (innate capacity) of the learner.

Some of the factors that make up the learning style of disadvantaged pupils have been referred to in Unit One and in preceding sections of this unit. These factors are:

Poor language development--Culturally disadvantaged pupils are not verbally oriented because of their poor language development and their inability to speak standard English. Much of the instruction, however, is carried on and transmitted verbally.

Inability to distinguish between noise and meaningful sound--This is closely related to their poor language development, or their inability to use language in the traditional ways of the school. Disadvantaged pupils do not attach the same significance to verbal stimuli as do middle-class pupils; consequently, they learn less from what they hear than middle-class pupils.

Inability to delay gratification--Much of the learning in school does not provide immediate gratification. Disadvantaged pupils are apt to give up on a particular learning task long before they can receive any gratification from it. Instruction should be planned to give these pupils immediate gratification. Encouragement and praise is gratification. Constant encouragement and praise from the teacher, therefore, should accompany their performance, if practical gratification cannot be immediately derived from a learning task.

Inability to sustain attention--The short attention span of disadvantaged pupils demands that learning tasks be short and varied. These pupils generally will not devote attention to any one task for sustained periods. This causes particular difficulty in primary grades. Young children have short attention spans anyway. When they are young and disadvantaged, their attention spans can best be described as compounded capriciousness. This makes it extremely difficult to teach them. One way primary teachers can get around this double limitation is to make sure that instruction is consistent with the learning style of disadvantaged pupils. Specifically, instruction should deemphasize a verbal approach--but this is the main area where disadvantaged pupils need help. The suggestion appears to be a contradiction, unless teachers realize that there are other areas, such as visual discrimination skills, manipulatory skills, reacting physically with the environment, etc., that must be developed before verbal skills and verbal reception are developed. Thus, if primary teachers emphasize the development of those skills that must precede verbal development, the attention span of disadvantaged pupils might be longer. Throughout the middle and upper grades, the attention span must be constantly increased by periodically increasing the time of learning tasks. This must be accompanied by instruction that is based on the interests and experience of disadvantaged pupils (this will be discussed in more detail in later units) at increasing levels of difficulty.

Other factors that make up the learning style of disadvantaged pupils that have not been previously discussed are discussed below. Not all disadvantaged pupils will include all of these factors to the same degree in their learning style. The heterogeneity of disadvantaged pupils permeates the discussion of learning style just as it permeated and was reflected in the discussion of economic level, experiential background, characteristics and, indeed, any other topic pertaining to disadvantaged pupils.

Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Have a Negative Attitude Toward Intellectual Tasks

Culturally disadvantaged pupils value physical prowess rather than intellectual prowess. Many of the activities in schools, to them, are "sissy" or "square." Furthermore, they do not see the application of intellectual skills in their cultural environment and they are not aware of the value of intellectual skills. Finally, disadvantaged pupils are present and practical oriented--that is, they want to see an immediate use for something and an immediate benefit. Much of the learning in school has to be stashed away for future use. In order to change their negative attitude toward intellectual tasks, they must be given constant rewards for performing intellectual tasks. Also, they should be shown, whenever possible, practical applications of learning. For example, they can be shown how a knowledge of percentages can uncover the exorbitant interest rates their parents are usually charged. This will "shake them up," and probably cause their parents to take a greater interest in education, too. It will also save them some money.

To change negative attitudes to positive attitudes toward intellectual tasks, connect learning to solving real problems in the pupils' environment, not "school problems" or problems of fantasy. In addition, praise the pupils for their attempts to perform intellectual tasks.

Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Do Not Use Adults as Sources of Information

Disadvantaged pupils, even though they are retarded in academic achievement, are often intellectual giants when compared to their parents! The Negro ghetto child in the sixth grade, the Appalachian child who has three or four years of urban school experience, the Mexican-American or Puerto-Rican child who speaks and reads English--all are often beyond their parents in intellectual achievement. They do not have to go to their parents for the kind of information relevant to the curriculum. Thus, they develop an attitude that adults are not sources of information. This attitude begins to develop when disadvantaged pupils are very young. Their parents are not likely to ask them, "What did you learn in school today?" Instead, parents most likely will want to know: "Did anyone pick on you today?" "Did you remember to bring home that new hat you got last week?" "Did the teacher treat you O.K.?" Disadvantaged parents are not likely to ask the child about academic matters. If the child asks his parents a question requiring academic information, the parents usually will not be able to help much. The older the child is, the less help the parent is able to give. In the case of many disadvantaged parents, it doesn't take too long (fourth or fifth grade is a conservative estimate) for the child to present problems and questions that are impossible for disadvantaged parents to solve (long division will throw most disadvantaged parents into a panic--that is, if they can recognize their own deficiency).

Disadvantaged pupils tend to generalize their belief that adults are not sources of information. This generalization, strangely, may even include teachers. It is not strange, however, if one realizes that much of the information disadvantaged pupils really need is seldom given by teachers. Instead, the information broadcast in the classroom is often impractical, for future use, or incomprehensible. Disadvantaged pupils simply won't respond to information of this kind or look upon the source of this kind of information as someone to go to for solving problems.

Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Respond More to Visual and Physical (Kinesthetic) Stimuli than Verbal and Written Stimuli

The ineffectiveness of verbal stimuli has been pointed out. There are, however, other means to transmit meaning and stimulate learning. One of the most effective means is to use audiovisual materials extensively with disadvantaged pupils. Audiovisual materials present material dramatically and interestingly. Also, they combine verbal stimuli with visual stimuli, and the pupil is able to derive more meaning from the verbal part of the presentation because it is reinforced by the visual part. In addition, audiovisual materials, such as pictures, filmstrips, movies, television, displays, etc., are the most efficient and economical method of filling in the experiential void of disadvantaged pupils. Audiovisual aids should be used throughout all grade levels in the education of culturally disadvantaged pupils. These aids have the double advantage of filling in the experiential void of disadvantaged pupils and teaching them skills and concepts, while being consistent with the learning style of these pupils.

Psychologists suspect that disadvantaged pupils learn best when they are physically involved in an activity. Again, the outstanding athletic record of disadvantaged pupils lends support to a supposition about disadvantaged pupils. For example, football requires many complex mental processes--quick evaluation, memory, strategy, interpretation--yet, disadvantaged boys learn these processes as well as or better than their middle-class peers. When learning football plays, however, participants "act out" the plays, rather than memorize them from a written or verbal description. Perhaps classroom teachers should borrow, whenever they can, the teaching methods of football coaches and involve disadvantaged pupils in physical activities to attain cognitive learning. For example, in primary grades pupils can trace letters and words with their fingertips or even their footsteps when learning to read.

Role playing is another activity that physically involves the pupil. This method can be used at every grade level and in any subject. For example, if pupils are studying community helpers in primary grades they can act the roles of community helpers; the best way for secondary pupils to learn how to participate in an interview is to let them play the roles of interview participants. Another way of physically involving pupils in a learning task is to let the pupils take the place of symbolic representations. This method is particularly applicable when teaching arithmetic. For example, instead of writing an addition or subtraction problem on the chalkboard, groups of pupils can be used instead of symbolic numerical representation--pupils can "walk through" arithmetic computations. In planning instruction, classroom teachers should try to include physical involvement of disadvantaged pupils whenever possible.

Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Are Present Oriented

Another conjecture of psychologists and other investigators in the area of educating the culturally disadvantaged is that these pupils are present oriented. This factor is increasingly significant as the grade level increases because so much of the content in the curriculum--especially in literature and social studies--is past oriented.

Disadvantaged pupils are not interested in the past. This conjecture is consistent with the cultural development of disadvantaged pupils. The past is usually unpleasant, full of hardship and bad times. On the other hand, middle-class individuals look on the past as the foundation of their present fortunate condition. Middle-class individuals tend to look at the past to determine how to preserve its legacy in the present and in the future. But disadvantaged individuals tend to look at the past as containing the elements of their tragedy--thus, they do not want to perpetuate the past. In addition, the conditions of deprivation forces disadvantaged pupils to constantly deal with day-by-day problems to sustain existence. Thus, disadvantaged pupils' attention is consistently focused on the present. Their preoccupation with the pressing problems of deprivation prevents them from shifting their orientation to the past.

The problem of time orientation of disadvantaged pupils is particularly acute in social studies. Social problems and historical events of the past have no apparent relevancy to the present. One of the purposes of teaching the social studies, however, is to develop social concepts (in addition to telling the story of the development of our society, inculcating patriotism, examining the roots of contemporary social phenomena, etc.). Concepts, however, are not bound by time. For example, the emergence of groups to power or the extension of democratic processes can be developed from a study of the civil rights movement just as well as from a study of colonial America. Such an approach to social studies has the advantage of focusing attention on the problems that presently concern pupils, not what concerned their forefathers. The past can be understood in terms of the present. That is, the social studies can be taught "backwards"--probably more effectively to disadvantaged pupils--just as well as they can be taught "frontwards" (taking a starting point in the past and progressing chronologically to the present). Current problems can be traced backwards to determine their cause. An approach like this has the additional advantage of helping disadvantaged pupils to understand their present condition so they can better cope with it.

Present orientation is probably not an exclusive factor of the learning style of disadvantaged pupils. Certainly, the younger the child, the more he is present oriented than past oriented, regardless of social class or cultural backgrounds.

Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Are Slow

Disadvantaged pupils perform intellectual tasks slowly. Some investigators have suggested that they are slow in performing school tasks because they are physical learners. Slowness should not, however, be equated with dullness. Other reasons for their slowness might be due to their lack of interest in the task, their lack of adequate preparation for the task, their poor language development which requires that written materials be "translated," their physical and emotional conditions, or the insignificance of speed in their subculture. The fact is, they are usually slow.

This means that teachers must plan adequate time for assignments to be completed. Also, disadvantaged pupils do not respond to exhortations to hurry. Just as they are not past oriented they are not speed oriented. Their slowness places them at a particular disadvantage in taking timed tests. This might be an additional reason to explain their generally low IQ scores that were discussed in Unit One.

Some investigators have suggested that slowness is a positive rather than a negative factor in the learning style of disadvantaged pupils. Slowness can be an asset in solving many problems. However, the dominant culture is keyed to speed, and so is the curriculum. Until disadvantaged pupils learn to operate at a faster pace, what seems to be an asset will actually continue to be a handicap.

Teachers should not be too much concerned with developing general speed in disadvantaged pupils. Speed comes with competence. Thus, the important thing is to help disadvantaged pupils develop competence in subject areas; speed will be a by-product.

Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Pursue One Problem at a Time

Disadvantaged pupils usually perform better when they are confronted with only one task or assignment. Thus, teachers should not give them multiple assignments or even multiple tasks within an assignment. In addition, assignments should not exceed a period--they should not be carried over to the next day. This is sometimes difficult to achieve in the elementary upper grades and secondary grades because of the nature of the assignments. When an assignment can't be completed in one period, it should be broken into segments that have a beginning and an end contained in one period.

Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils Learn Better by Inductive Rather than Deductive Approaches

Material presented in parts that move to the whole, rather than from the whole to the parts, is a better approach to use with disadvantaged pupils. For example, in teaching paragraph development to disadvantaged pupils the topic sentence should not be introduced first. Instead, pupils should be taught to write three or four sentences about a topic. After they are able to do this, they can be taught to write one sentence that tells what the other three or four are about. In this way, moving from the supporting sentences to the topic sentence, the inductive approach is taken. The inductive approach--moving from particulars to the general--should be taken with disadvantaged pupils.

Summary of the Learning Style of Culturally Disadvantaged Pupils

Before summarizing the learning style of culturally disadvantaged pupils, four points should be reemphasized: (1) their learning style is inefficient; (2) their learning style handicaps them in academic achievement; (3) instruction must be planned on the basis of their learning style; (4) their learning style should be considered temporary--an aim of education should be to help disadvantaged pupils develop a more efficient, more mature learning style.

The learning style of disadvantaged pupils is made up of the following:

--Poor language skills

--Inability to distinguish meaningful sound from noise

--Short attention span

--Negative attitude toward intellectual tasks

--Inability to recognize adults as a source of information

--Response better to physical rather than verbal stimuli

--Present rather than past oriented

--Slow to perform mental tasks

--Inability to deal with more than one problem at a time

--Induction rather than deduction

Concluding Statement for Units One and Two

The purpose of Unit One was to develop the concept of deprivation; the purpose of Unit Two was to focus on the product of deprivation: the culturally disadvantaged pupil. This pupil has been described in general terms. Several times in Units One and Two, the dangers of generalizing about a whole group of people was pointed out. The heterogeneity of disadvantaged pupils was even emphasized in both units. Again, these points should be emphasized. Nevertheless, Units One and Two are an attempt to establish a framework in which the culturally disadvantaged pupil can be understood. In Units Three and Four, pupils from specific ethnic subcultures will be discussed to narrow the focus on the culturally disadvantaged. The purposes of Units Three and Four are to give teachers some understanding of specific ethnic subcultures; to help teachers understand characteristics of pupils from specific ethnic groups within the general framework of deprivation; and to give teachers direction in planning instruction on the basis of pupils' specific ethnic backgrounds.

SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS

1. There are certain general psycho-social characteristics associated with disadvantaged pupils; disadvantaged pupils, however, differ in the degree they adhere to these characteristics.

2. The general characteristics of culturally disadvantaged pupils have educational implications; the instructional program must be based on these characteristics; and the instructional program must help pupils eliminate the deficiency implied by the characteristic.

3. Culturally disadvantaged pupils are inheritors of poverty.

4. Culturally disadvantaged pupils are caught up in "cycles of poverty."

5. Educational poverty is the most important cycle of poverty to break.

6. Culturally disadvantaged pupils have a poor self-concept. Their poor self-concept makes them "failure oriented."

7. Culturally disadvantaged pupils have a different value system than the dominant culture.

8. Culturally disadvantaged pupils live in a negative environment.

9. Culturally disadvantaged pupils have a "learning style" which limits their chances of success in the curriculum; disadvantaged pupils, however, differ in the degree they conform to this "learning style."

10. The learning style of culturally disadvantaged pupils should be considered temporary; they should be helped to acquire a more efficient, more mature learning style.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the following: At what point is one considered disadvantaged? How many characteristics are common to disadvantaged pupils, and to what degree is an individual described by these characteristics to be considered disadvantaged?

2. Discuss the following: Disadvantaged pupils are more heterogeneous than other pupils.

3. Select one of the general characteristics and discuss the educational implications of it. Discuss ways the school can help correct the deficiency of the characteristic.

4. Select one of the "cycles of poverty" (economic, educational, aspirational, moral and spiritual, experiential) and discuss ways the school can help break the cycle.

5. Discuss the following: Breaking any one of the cycles of poverty makes it easier to break the other cycles of poverty.

6. How does the following statement relate to self-concept?

   > "Tell a man what he is, and that is what he most likely will become; tell a man what he ought to be, and that is what he most likely will work toward."

7. "Culture clash" is a term that refers to the conflict that results when persons of different cultural backgrounds with different value systems come into contact with each other. Discuss the implications of "culture clash" in the classroom (middle-class teachers encountering culturally disadvantaged pupils). What are some steps that can be taken to alleviate the conflict resulting from "culture clash"?

8. Select one of the factors that makes up the learning style of disadvantaged pupils and show how disadvantaged pupils are handicapped in a particular subject because of the way it is commonly taught. Suggest ways the teaching of the subject can be changed to fit the learning style of disadvantaged pupils.

9. What are some of the ways teachers can help older disadvantaged pupils change their learning style?

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